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PROTEUS

№ 12

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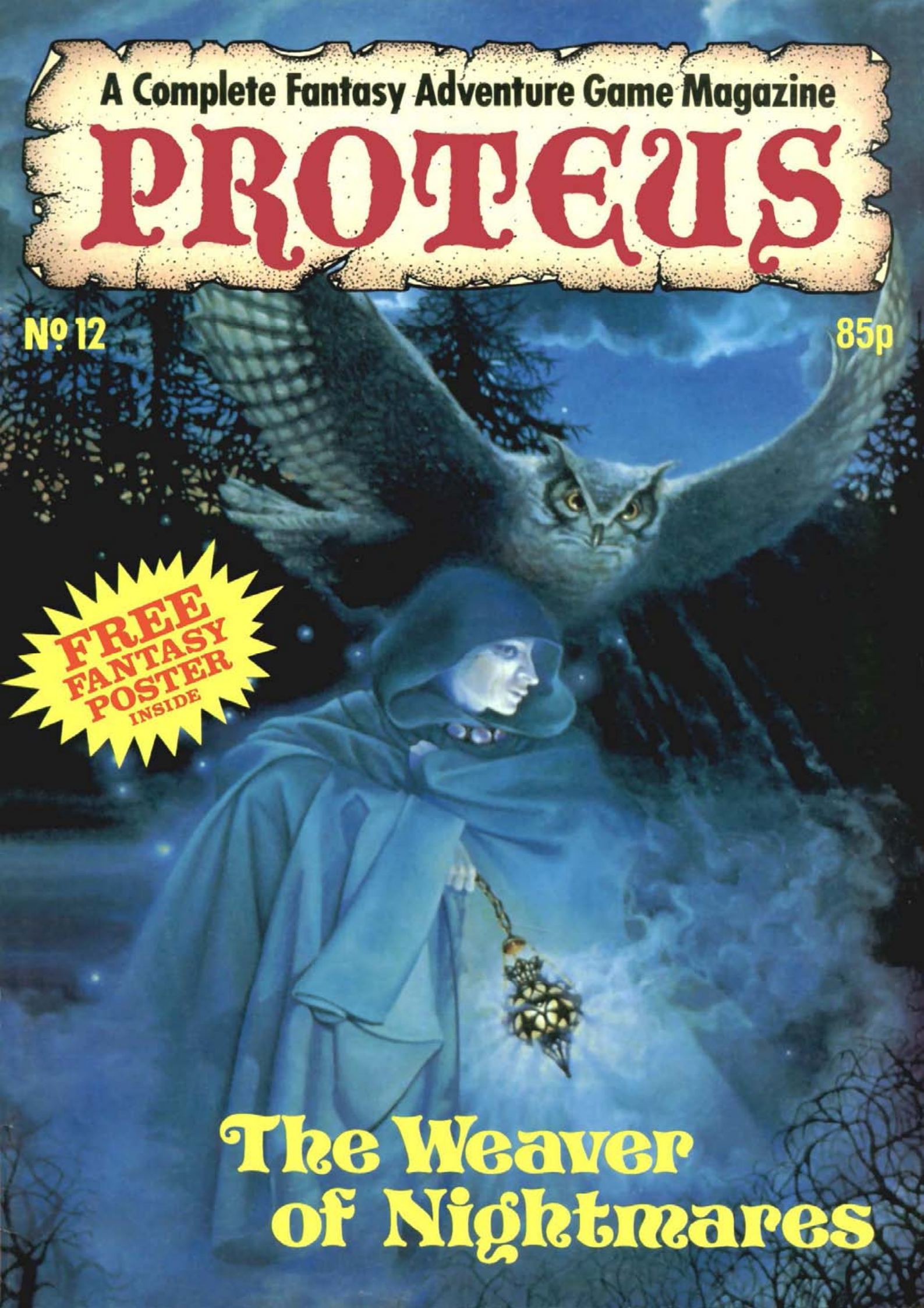

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PROTEUS No. 12

The Weaver of Nightmares

by David Brunskill

DICE and a pencil are all you need to begin this adventure – then *you* decide which route to take, which dangers to brave.

As you progress in your Quest, you are likely to encounter various traps, or face monsters. You will also get information, or find certain items which will be of help to you in your quest. You should record these in your *quest sheet* as well as keeping an account of how many rations you have left. As you use up rations, remember to cross them off in your *quest sheet*.

It is important that you build up a map of the way. You may not succeed at your first attempt, but each new journey will give you more information – until you are at last successful in your quest.

If you try to read the magazine in numerical order, it will make no sense. You must choose, when you are given the choice, which section to turn to, and which traps, puzzles, or monsters to face. Good luck!

The free poster in Issue 13, on sale July 17th, is by F. Brunner.

The story, by Elizabeth Caldwell, will present you with a different kind of challenge. Now a full member of the Promethean Guild, you are hired to investigate the sorcerer/scientist Shargan, whose laboratory lies deep within an active volcano.

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Introduction

THIS is not a story about our modern world, but one of long ago, when strange creatures roamed the land, and Sorcerers possessed great power. As an adventurer, your Strength, Courage and Agility have brought you safely through many daunting quests in the past. And when you begin this adventure, you will need all these qualities. Below, you will discover – with a little luck – how swift and strong, you are. You will need two dice, a pencil, and several sheets of paper: use the pencil and paper to draw a map of your progress. You may not succeed at the first attempt, and the map will be useful in future attempts.

There is a Quest Sheet opposite, for you to write down your scores for Dexterity and Strength, and to keep a note of your rations, secrets learnt, and items discovered. You may prefer, before you begin your adventure, to use the printed Quest Sheet simply as a model for the things you will need to take note of, or keep a record of, during your Quest. If you do this, you will obviously need another piece of paper to copy down the headings on the Quest Sheet.

Dexterity and Strength

Roll one dice. Add 6 to this number, and make a note of it on your Quest Sheet. This is your *Dexterity* score, and indicates your skill and mastery of swordsmanship.

Roll two dice. Add 12 to this number, and make a note of it on your Quest Sheet. This is your *Strength* score, and is a measure of your fitness and stamina.

Your Strength and Dexterity ratings will probably change during the course of your adventure. You may lose Strength points in battle, for example, and then restore them by eating a meal. Your characteristics may also be affected by items you discover in the course of your adventure, and, in such situations, you will be told in the text what to do.

You must remember, however, that your Strength and Dexterity scores must never exceed their *Initial* values, as determined by the dice rolls at the start of any one adventure.

Beginning your journey

You are dressed in leather armour, and are equipped with a sword, shield and a short dagger. You carry a backpack in which to stow your provisions and any items you may discover.

You start your quest with just two gold pieces in your pocket. However, you will be given more, and may also discover more, or have the option of spending what you have. It is a good idea to keep track of the number of gold pieces you possess, as your adventure progresses.

Rules for fighting

As you explore, you will encounter creatures which you may choose to engage in combat, or be forced to fight with for your life. Each creature will have its own Dexterity and Strength scores, given in the text. Make a note of these.

To resolve a battle:

1. Roll two dice, and add the creature's current Dexterity score. This is its *Fighting Power.*

2. Roll two dice, and add your own current Dexterity score. This is your *Fighting Power.*

3. If your *Fighting Power is* greater than the creature's, you have scored a blow and wounded it. Subtract two Strength points from its Strength score at that moment (unless told otherwise in the text). If the creature's *Fighting Power is* greater than yours in this round, it has wounded you. Subtract two points from your current Strength score. If both scores are the same, you have parried each other's blows, and neither of you loses any points.

The next round in the battle is done in just the same way. You repeat steps 1, 2, and 3 above. When either your or the creature's Strength score is reduced to zero, the battle is over. A zero Strength score means death, and you must begin again with new dice rolls for Dexterity and Strength.

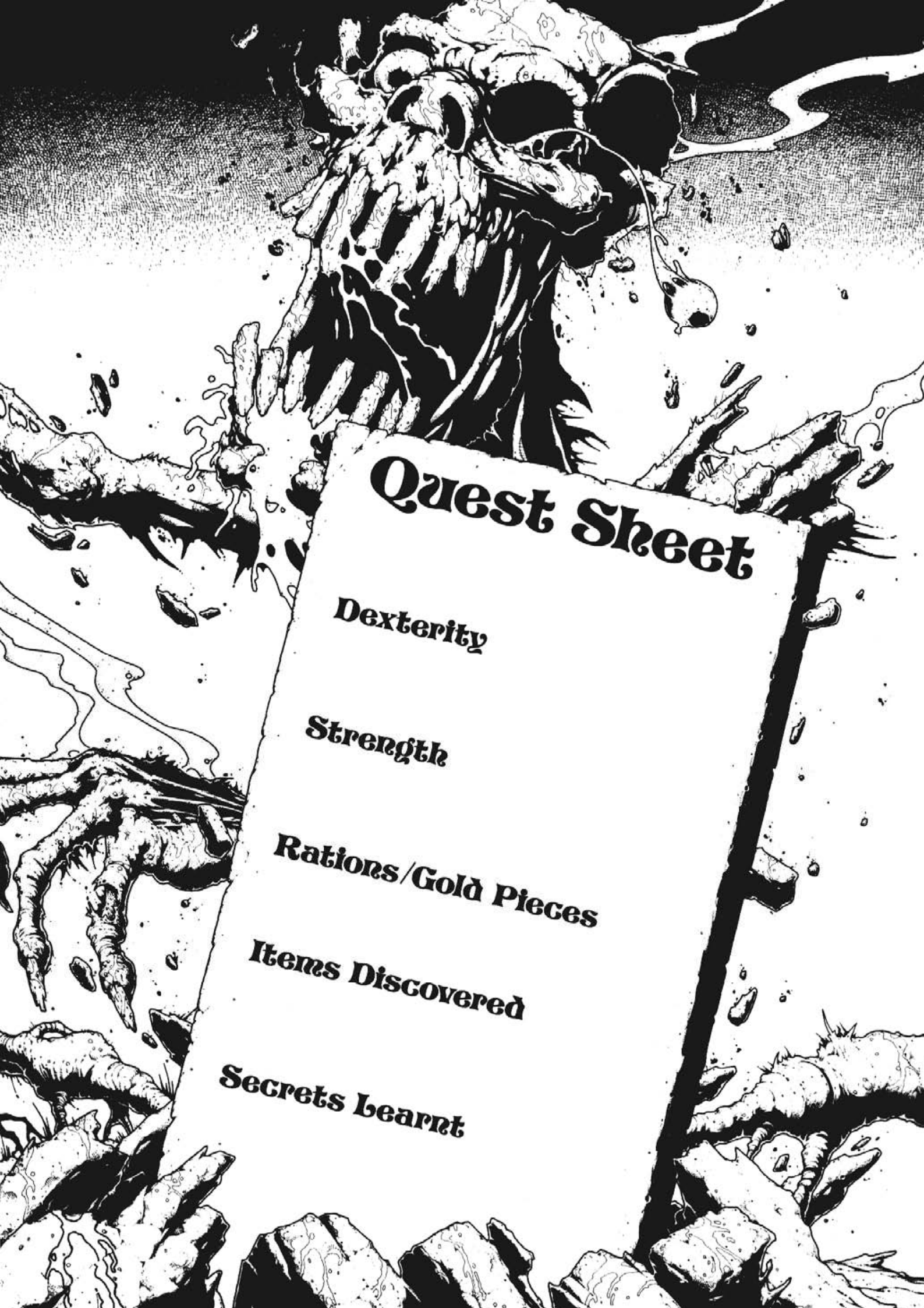
Losing and gaining points

In some sections, you will be awarded extra points (for example, you may read "Gain three Strength points"). You add these to your current Strength score: but remember, these scores may never exceed their *Initial* values. When you lose points (for example, "Lose one Dexterity point and two Strength points"), you simply deduct these from your current scores. However, this may be only temporary – for example, "deduct one Dexterity point for the duration of this battle" means you can restore the lost point if you win.

Replenishing your Strength

You are about to read of the start of your quest for the Weaver of Nightmares. As you will see, you begin your journey with five fresh meals in your backpack. Each meal restores five Strength points, and you may eat a meal at any time, except during actual combat.

When you eat a meal, deduct one from the number of rations you have, and add five points to your Strength score at that time. Use your rations wisely: your quest is not an easy one. And remember that in the land of the Weaver of Nightmares, reality and illusion are horribly similar!


Quest Sheet
Dexterity
Strength
Rations/Gold Pieces
Items Discovered
Secrets Learnt

Your Quest Begins...

You have crossed deserts before, cut your way through dense forests, fought through cities peopled by horrendous monsters. But never before have you come across such a daunting, arid land as you now find yourself in. A gleaming sun sits relentlessly in the silky sky, as you force yourself steadily East across the flint-hard, bone-white ground. For a night and a day you have been crossing this parched and cracked wasteland, and – though you have been cautious – your water-flask is getting dangerously low.

After another hour, you are greatly relieved to find the ground becoming less inhospitable, and at last, as the sun approaches the horizon behind you, there is some sign of life ahead.

Tired and hungry, you enter a poor township as night falls. The grey-faced, badly-dressed people barely glance at you as you walk down the unlit main street, and you can almost feel the pervasive air of hopelessness and resignation. A chipped and faded sign as you entered proclaimed the town to be Glengantha, and now you stop to read, by the light of a rising full moon, a notice nailed to the trunk of a dying tree. There is, apparently, to be an urgent meeting that evening in the Community Hall, and you now see that a steady trickle of people is heading towards a larger building at the end of the street. You follow them, past the dilapidated wooden and stone-built shacks, and into the hall. Torches are lit at intervals along the walls, and seated behind a low table at the far end are four men and a woman, deep in discussion.

After a few minutes, the man in the centre of this presiding quintet holds up his hand, and the low murmuring of the assembled people dies away.

The man lowers his hand, stands, and begins: “People of Glengantha, I will not waste time with empty words. We are all, I am sure, aware of the situation. What we must decide tonight is what action to take.” He looks steadily around the hall before continuing, “our choices are few: if we stay, then surely we will die. The harvest has been even worse than we feared – we cannot survive the coming winter. The desert still steadily encroaches from the West; in another two seasons there will be no ground left to farm. To survive, we must leave.”

In the pause that follows, people speak quietly to each other in sad, muted tones. Then the chairman begins speaking again: “Our efforts to treat with the Weaver have been disastrous. Our emissaries have not returned. Our army – such as it was – was routed when we attempted to rescue our brothers by force of arms; more than a hundred died or are missing. I fear there is nothing more we can do for them. We must now choose then, between sailing South, to Barlinnia, in the hope of survival against the warlike people of that country; or North, into uncharted waters. Consider these choices now, discuss them tonight. Tomorrow, we will meet again, and a show of hands will decide our future.”

The chairman sits again, and a buzz goes around. Gradually, still talking, the people begin to disperse, and in a short time only the five at the end of the hall remain. You approach, and introduce yourself, and they look at you curiously. “What brings you to Glengantha?” asks one after a moment, and you explain that you have come from afar, over mountains, through miles of thick gorse and tangleweed, and finally across the desert. Their expressions change, as they see your sun-bleached hair and cracked lips. “You are the first traveller in memory to come to Glengantha from the West,” says one. “Our own party of explorers had eventually to turn back last year. We know there is no hope of resettling there.”

You ask to hear more, and the chairman explains. “As you must have heard, we know that we can no longer survive here in Glengantha. A short distance East is the sea, and we trade with the people of Barlinnia, to the South. But they are a ferocious, aggressive people, who would not welcome us as settlers. North, we have never sighted land. And to the East is Nanglidia, the land of the Weaver of Nightmares. He is a sorcerer, able to conjure the most terrible visions and creatures out of the air – though this power also extends to real and very dangerous beings. We sent first one, then a second envoy across the short stretch of water that divides our domains; neither returned, though we were asking only to be allowed to farm on his fertile land. We would gladly pay taxes. But he sneers at us. He has a messenger and apprentice – Dreadthread – who taunts us. When we assembled a force, and sailed to Nanglidia to rescue our envoys, we were met by a small army of terrible, vicious creatures, the like of which we had never seen or imagined before. We were driven back to our ships, leaving many dead, and more captured. That is our plight: we cannot stay, but have nowhere to go.”

As he finishes speaking, a misty, bluish-green glow appears to the side, pulsing in the torchlight. Your hand is instinctively on your sword-hilt as a face begins to take shape within the writhing light. Larger than life, it moves from side-to-side, apparently suspended in mid-air. The pointed ears flutter like small wings, and the eyes are unblinking, and tinged with madness beneath a spiked metal cap. It grins – a humourless, contemptuous expression – then speaks, in nasal, mocking tones. “But you can have back your prisoners,” you hear. “They are alive – though not perhaps very comfortable. Come and get them: the Weaver has made it easy for you. Knowing how pathetic you Glenganthans are, he has told me to tell you this: there are seven tokens about his house. Each contains part of a message; find all seven, and bring them to him, and your precious captives will be returned. Of course, these tokens will not be easy to discover; I myself have scattered them about his house. And then there are the Weaver’s companions, who dislike visitors! However, the Weaver is bored, and would appreciate some entertainment. Come, find the tokens, bring them to him; perhaps he may even allow you to farm on his land. You will at least, if you succeed, be granted safe conduct back. He looks forward to seeing you!”

There is a screeching laugh, echoing for some time, and the vision fades. There is a long silence, until at last the chairman says quietly, “That was Dreadthread. He delights in tormenting us.”

You look at their dejected, defeated faces, and come to a decision. You tell them that you will go, that you will find the tokens and reclaim the prisoners. The five look at

you, their faces each a picture of awe and amazement. “You?” the woman says. “Why should you help us?” You shrug; you do not like the sound of this Weaver. Also, as you point out, it seems that you also now have nowhere else to go. They all begin talking at once then, until the chairman takes control. “If you would speak on our behalf, we would be forever in your debt,” he says. “But the dangers are very real, and the Weaver is not trustworthy.” You smile, and say that you earn your living by such quests. His face falls: “I fear we could not pay you enough,” he says. “Our coffers are almost empty.” You dismiss this, saying you require only rations, and transport to the Weaver’s land.

Within an hour, you have been taken to the chairman’s home and given a fine meal. Five food packages are made up for you, and placed in your backpack, and a purse of twenty gold pieces is given to you; with the two you already have, you now possess a total of twenty-two gold pieces.

A ship, you are told, sails at dawn for Barlinnia. The captain might be persuaded – for a fee – to take you East to the land of the Weaver. “There is another who may help you,” you are told. “In the woods South of our village a woman called Frowellyn lives. She understands the roots and herbs of the woods better than any, and her potions have healed many a Glenganthan. But she will not be easy to discover, and if she does not wish to meet you, you will not find her. Our ship will not wait – we have but the one, and its travels are already fraught with danger. It takes the morning tide. If you have not embarked by sunrise, then you are lost – as are we all. It lies due East, in the bay, making ready to set sail; and now you must do as you think best.”

Impatient to begin, you strap on your backpack, sling your shield over your shoulder and adjust the position of your sword. The moon has risen now, full and bright, as you step out into the main street. You glance around the impoverished township once more, and consider your first move.

Now read on....

1

Due East, following the main street out of the town, you should arrive at the harbour, where, you hope, you will be able to pay or persuade the captain to carry you to Nanglidia. However, a short distance along the main street, a road goes South. Will you:

Follow the main road East? Turn to **4**
Try the way South? Turn to **20**

2

"Aren't we clever, then?" Dreadthread smiles. "Two keys we have, well, so nice, so clever!" The candles dim, and his image glows silvery-grey against the darkened wall.

"In fact," he says, "neither key will allow you out of this room. However, my key will – and you can have it if you can tell me what number should be on the white key." He stares at you intensely. "Twice the number that should be on the white key," he gabbles, as though reciting something learnt by heart, "subtracted from the number on the black key, is the number on the key I hold." He vanishes abruptly, before reappearing to add, "also, the number on my key is only one-quarter of what should be on the white key. So," he grins, "what is the number that should be on the white key?"

When you have worked this out, turn to that section number. If you cannot work it out, turn to **87**.

3

Your first sword-blow cuts deep into the wood. Encouraged, you wrench out your sword and begin systematically cutting and hacking; there is light on the other side, and soon you have hewn a gap large enough for you to push your way through.

You are in a comfortable room; thick rugs and cushions are scattered about, and lazily watching you is a calm-eyed man, seated in an ornate chair. A table is at his side, set with silver cutlery, but there is no-one else present, and no other furnishings. The man still watches you, his fine-cut features betraying no emotion. "Good-day," he says at last. "May I introduce myself? My name is Chunk. Please sit down." Turn to **176**.

4

The road is straight, and you follow it through the town without impediment. Curious people stand on street corners, or stare from their doorways as you pass at a brisk pace between the poor houses. Efforts have been made to repair many of them, but broken roofs patched with pieces of old sailcloth only serve to heighten the general air of deprivation.

Several times, people point you out, and the group huddled round the fire in the square wish you well and wave, as you press on.

It is not long before you are on the outskirts of Glengantha, and continuing East. In the distance, on your right, you can see the dense woods you were told of, and faintly, you can hear the sea. You pass a road off to your right, and not long after that, a second. The sound of the sea is clear now, and the air tastes slightly salty.

A short distance further, you stop. You are on a headland, overlooking the moonlit bay. A ship rides at anchor in the gentle swell, and a few people are loading what you guess must be last-minute provisions, struggling along the jetty under the weight of various-sized boxes and barrels. You can make out their voices, carried clearly on the night air. Apart from these few crewmen, the quay is quiet, and you decide to camp where you are until dawn. Used to sleeping rough, you soon have a blanket of leaves and grasses, and settle down, your sword by your side. In minutes you are fast asleep. Turn to **78**.

5

Only a short way further West, you arrive at another junction, this time to your right. Will you:

Try the way North? Turn to **48**
Continue West? Turn to **101**

6

Bright pain shoots up your arm as your hand reaches the rim of the jar. You draw back, your arm temporarily paralysed. Lose three Strength points. The iron square has dropped from your fingers, and now lies on the table's smooth surface. You put it back in the dish, and reconsider – turn to **29**.

7

The path ends abruptly at a junction not much further on, and you stop. Will you now go:

North? Turn to **122**
South? Turn to **62**

8

Swiftly, you take the potion of Lie from your backpack and drink it, while the Thin Man watches, puzzled and rather hesitant. Will you now say, boldly, that you are one of the Weaver's messengers, and come bringing important news for him? Turn to **124**. Or that you have just drunk a magic potion which gives you immense power and skill – and that you are willing to give him such a potion? Turn to **167**.

9

You will have to act swiftly against this monster, and there are only two magic potions which might be immediately helpful – Var, and Kil. If you have a potion of Var, and wish to use it now, turn to **183**; if you have Kil, turn to **187**. If you have neither, you will have to fight unaided now – turn to **16**.

10

You try the key in the sturdy door: it turns, and the door creaks on its hinges as you push it slowly open. Reaching for the key again, you are just able to see the end of it disappearing into the keyhole, as though it were being swallowed. Smiling slightly to yourself, as you had half-expected something like that, you look around at the tiny room you are now in. The floor is littered with bones, and scraps of skin and hair, and a rat scampers between your legs. The air is warm and moist and stinking.

The shadows are deep, but as you stand there, you can feel movement on your left, and turn swiftly to see a ghastly creature reaching for you. The face might once

have been human, but is barely recognisable – its nose has all but rotted away, and the features are horribly disfigured by running scores and scabs. As it reaches for you, and you squirm in the confined space, trying to avoid its foul embrace, you realise that a third arm protrudes from its chest.

Backed into a corner, there is no room to even draw your sword, let alone any potions you might have, and you desperately try to fend off the thing with your bare hands. Its stinking breath makes you choke for a moment, as you grapple with the creature, and you wonder whether it is all a nightmare. If you believe the thing is an illusion, turn to **77**. If you think it's real, turn to **115**.

11

Pressing the handle, you inch open the door – but it opens quite easily, and you kneel down to see not one, but three tokens on the stone floor. They are arranged in a line, and inscribed, from left to right, 'ZEOBEB', 'ZEO', and 'ZEOPSAJ'. Each rests on a wooden plaque: the left reads, "Take not the centre token." The centre says, "Take not this token," while the right-hand one tells you, "This is the token." When you have decided which token to take with you, make a note, and turn to **192**.

12

There is nothing imaginary about the mighty blow that smashes into your shield, knocking you back against the wall. Lose three Strength points. Collecting your senses, as Baulk advances, you prepare to fight to the death.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
BAULK:	8	16

If you win, turn to **212**.

13

There is no obvious change, as you drain the bottle of Kil potion, but within seconds your confidence, agility and energy are heightened. Add three Dexterity points and four Strength points to your current scores for the duration of this battle – turn to **155**.

14

You have a red casket. Carefully, you lift the lid – inside, a beautifully-made dagger of solid silver nestles on a bed of velvet. You take out the dagger, and look at it more carefully: the thin blade glints in the poor light, and you put the fine weapon away carefully in your backpack. Now, you must find a way out of this apparently featureless room – turn to **224**.

15

You swing your sword at the wood – a mighty blow; but your fine blade passes straight through the wood as though it did not exist! You press the wood again with your palms – it seems solid enough; you cut at it again, and again your sword glides through, leaving the surface unmarked. Mystified, you can only put your sword away, and return North – turn to **203**.

16

The Mawgrind's spiny coat gives it some protection against your sword, so deduct just one Strength point for each successful blow of yours. Each successful attack by the Mawgrind will cause the usual two Strength points of damage to you. The Mawgrind appears strong and powerful, and the battle begins.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
MAWGRIND:	9	14

If you win, turn to **113**.

17

You could try Var, or Kil; you are pretty sure that Lie will not be of help here – Baulk does not look disposed to listen to stories. If you wish to try the potion of Var, turn to **63**. If you wish to try Kil, turn to **120**.

18

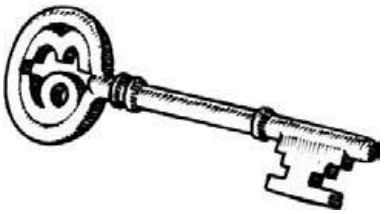
Taking the fine silver dagger from your backpack, you draw the edge along the cord, and at once it parts. Still cautious, you open the package: it is completely empty! Angrily, you try the next – it too is empty, and so is the next one and the one after that. But just as you are about to give up, thinking this another of the Weaver's nasty jokes, the fifth package reveals a bright metal token! You take it out at once, reading the letters 'QIXAN', and put it into your backpack.

Hurrying back down the broad staircase, you consider what to do next. Will you try:

The right-hand staircase?	Turn to **76**
The hatchway (if you have the rope)?	Turn to **69**

19

The third jar glows and sinks into the table, as you drop in the piece of metal. You know now what must go in the final jar, and drop it in. It also disappears into the tabletop, and at once a drawer shoots out of the table, to your right. In the drawer, you see a black key with the number '63' inscribed in it. Warily, you pick it up, and put it in your backpack. As you do so, the locked door slowly creaks open, inviting you to leave. Sword in hand, you waste no time in getting out of this room, and heading West back to the main corridor, to continue North. Turn to **66**.

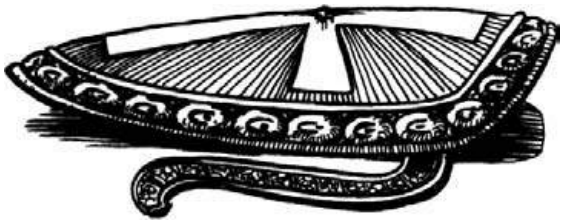


20

Although the going is easy at first, the road soon becomes little more than an alleyway between the decaying houses. And it is not long before the town is behind you, and you cross a tilled field; directly ahead of you, the woods loom, eerie in the moonlight.

The path continues South into the wood, and you tread more carefully, alert for movement. The trees crowd in as you progress, and you have to duck under overhanging branches, and push thin twigs aside. Evidently, this way is not much used. Soon, however, you reach a crossroads, and must decide which way to go now. Will you go:

East?	Turn to **33**
West?	Turn to **144**
South?	Turn to **65**



21

Transfixed, you can only stand helplessly in the darkened room as the Wraiths press in on you, pleading for the song of release. Your head is swimming . . . and soon you will join them, another brave ghost, unable to rest – your quest is over.

22

You look into the assorted jars and pots, and sniff at some of the cheeses and jams. However there seems to be nothing here of any real interest, and you turn to leave. But as you turn in the crowded, confined space, your elbow knocks over a jar. Throw two dice: if you throw 2 to 5, turn to **41**. If you throw 6 to 12, turn to **75**.

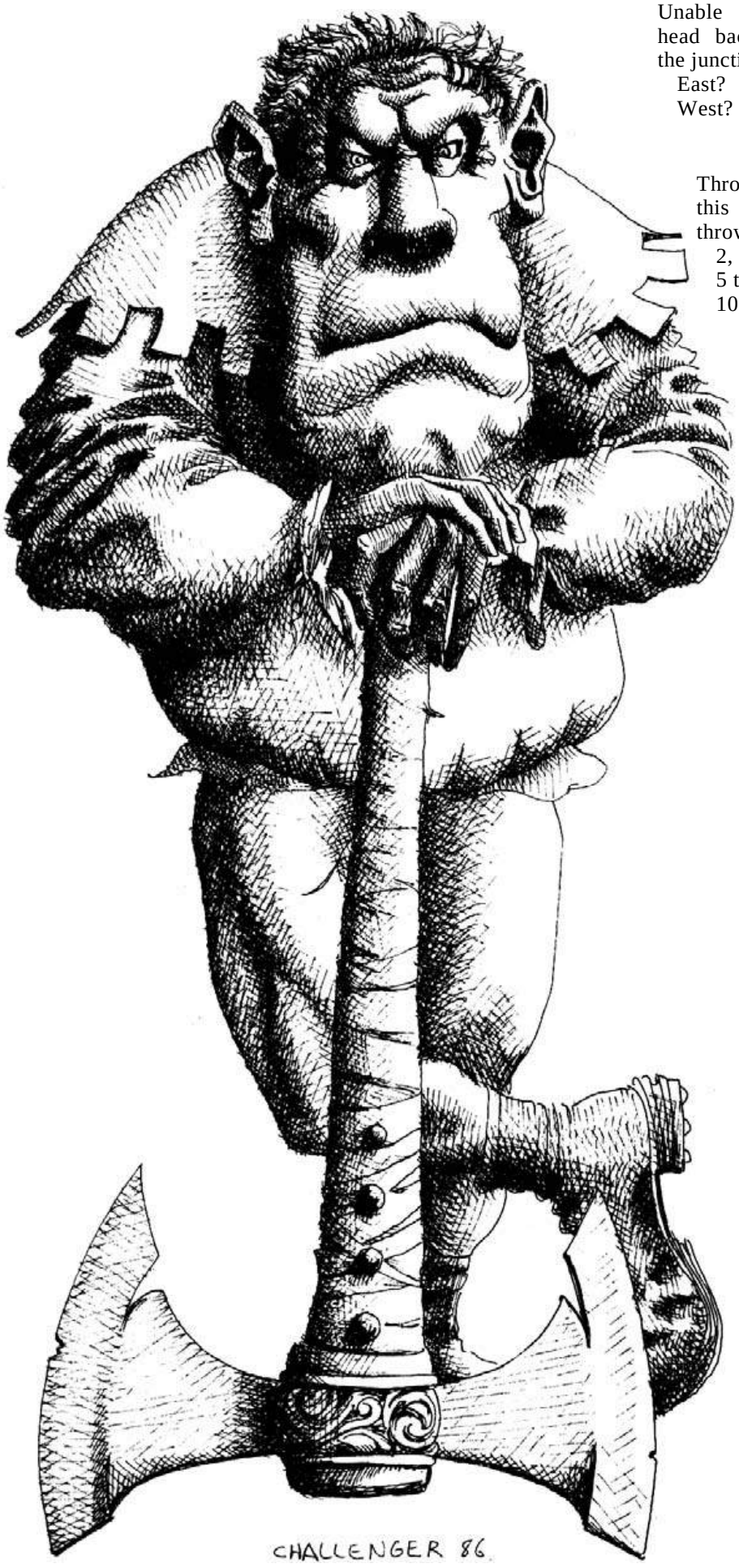
23

You realise, as you heave on the oars, that this boat is not small; twenty or thirty could find a place, just. Pulling away, you watch the Glenganthans' trading ship turn South; and as you beach your rowing-boat, the ship is lost to view; you drag your boat ashore, sweating in the fine sunlight as the keel grumbles over the pebbled beach.

You begin making your way East, and soon are on a good road between ground that is obviously fertile, but overgrown with tall grasses, choking weeds, strange multicoloured flowers, plants and trees.

The road turns North, and you walk only a short way before you stop before the strangest house you have ever seen. You slowly approach a wooden door, directly in front of you. Above you, the house looms: there are four levels, though as you approached you would have sworn there were but two. The East side is strangely out of proportion; and on your left, above you, a small room juts out from the main building.

You pinch yourself, grin bravely, and push open the door ahead. You are in a small, darkened, windowless room. Though you saw windows from outside. A chandelier of spitting candles lights the room, and, leaning on an axe and facing you, is a large man in a green suit. His jaw is disproportionately large, and his tiny eyes glare at you. When at last he speaks, his voice is like a quiet earthquake. "I live *there,"* he booms, indicating a door behind him, swinging his left arm wildly. "There –" another wild swing, with his right arm this time, and you see a door on your left as you face him, "there are others." He stops for a moment, thinking about this, his small brow creased in deep thought. "Yes," he says, finally, "lots more." After another thoughtful silence, he asks, "You come to see Weaver?" As you try to decide what to do or say now, the huge man grasps his axe in both hands, and slowly walks towards you. "Baulk," he says, by way of introduction. "Me. I'm Baulk, and now I slice you up." He nods to himself a few times, as you grasp your sword, and prepare for a tough fight. Then you stop for a moment, remembering all that you have learnt. Perhaps this giant is not real at all. Perhaps it would be safer to simply ignore what you see before you. What will you do now? If you decide that this is an illusion, and ignore it, turn to **49**. If you would rather attack at once, turn to **211**. If you have magic, and wish to try some here, turn to **17**. However, only Var or Kil are likely to be of help.



24

Unable to progress any further, you turn and head back South to the end of this corridor. At the junction again, will you now go:

East?	Turn to **74**
West?	Turn to **60**

25

Throw two dice to discover the outcome of this trial of strength and nerve. If you throw:

2, 3, or 4	Turn to **139**
5 to 9	Turn to **156**
10, 11, or 12	Turn to **46**

26

The narrow track soon widens into a small clearing, and a shadow detaches itself from the mottled foliage. The moon is huge now, and an owl swoops out of its pearly glow, skimming just over your head. There is a sharp, not unpleasant smoky smell in the air, and you see that a young woman is standing now, watching you, from the centre of the clearing. She swings a glowing incense-holder, and it is from this that the smoke emanates.

The owl swoops again, and the twinkling lights behind her, like miniature stars, glow more brightly for a moment. She is younger than you had expected – for you are sure that this is Frowellyn – and simply dressed, a long cloak billowing in the light breeze that has suddenly got up. ”You came to see me,” she states, giving you a curious, sidelong look. Her voice is surprisingly high-pitched, as she continues: “my potions, the secrets of the Earth. You wish to buy some. Have you gold?”

You hear yourself agreeing that you have gold, and, dream-like, follow her a short distance South to what appears to be a large dead tree. A section of the trunk swings open, and you follow Frowellyn through this door.

She hangs her incense-holder on a hook behind the disguised door, which has already swung closed, and limps over to a battered three-legged stool. A log-fire burns steadily in the grate, and a small cauldron bubbles over it. There is a low table slightly to her side, and a number of objects are arranged on it – bottles, strange stones, bunches of leaves and herbs, a coil of rope, bones, bracelets – you begin to feel light-headed. The room is oppressively warm, though larger than you would have thought from outside, and the smell of incense combined with the strange odour from the cauldron makes you dizzy for a moment. Frowellyn herself is

becoming hazy, and it takes a determined effort, as you push your fists into your eyes, to get the room into focus again.

Each object on the table beside Frowellyn has a metal tag on a chain, labelled, and each a price. "You may choose what you will," she says, "so long as you can pay me."

You move forward and peer at the bottles. The labels tell you little – and Frowellyn remains smiling at you enigmatically, saying nothing. The potions look promising, though you are less sure of the other objects. Frowellyn is watching your eyes, and speaks again: "Take as many as you wish – if you can pay. Take more than one of any." Her high-pitched voice sinks into the dead wooden walls, as she continues, "you are not sick. Why come you looking for me?"

You begin to explain, and she nods vigorously. "You will need these and more, if you wish to meet the Weaver. And you will need this –" she holds out the coil of rope, and you take it.

Now, you could simply leave – turn to **133**; or choose what you will, or can, afford. After each choice, turn to the section indicated, you will then be told to return to this section to make another choice if you wish. When you have chosen all that you require, or can pay for, turn to **133**.

The labels and prices on the potions read:

Var	4 gold pieces	Turn to **174**
Tel	3 gold pieces	Turn to **132**
Kil	5 gold pieces	Turn to **119**
Lie	2 gold pieces	Turn to **52**
Trip	2 gold pieces	Turn to **146**
Save	4 gold pieces	Turn to **104**

27

The Weaver smiles. "No," he says quietly. There is a sound from above and you look up – a mighty axe blade is slowly dropping downwards like a pendulum, as the Weaver leans back in his chair, still smiling. It rapidly swings down towards you, and you have no escape. The swinging blade, glinting in the light, descends as you crouch, trying to squirm away from its edge . . . your quest is over.

28

The candles blaze into life again as Dreadthread disappears, and you find that you are holding a red key in your right hand, and a small, rectangular piece of silver metal in the other. It is clearly inscribed with the letters, 'OARAJ', and you are certain that you now hold one of the tokens.

A door in the right-hand corner of the North wall slowly takes shape, and going over to it, you try the red key. The door opens at once, and you try to remove the key: slightly to your surprise, it comes out easily, and you put both the red key and the first token into your backpack, before going through the doorway to head North – turn to **54**.

29

Which object will you place in the first jar in the row:

The star?	Turn to **128**
The square?	Turn to **6**
The triangle?	Turn to **53**
The disc?	Turn to **05**

30

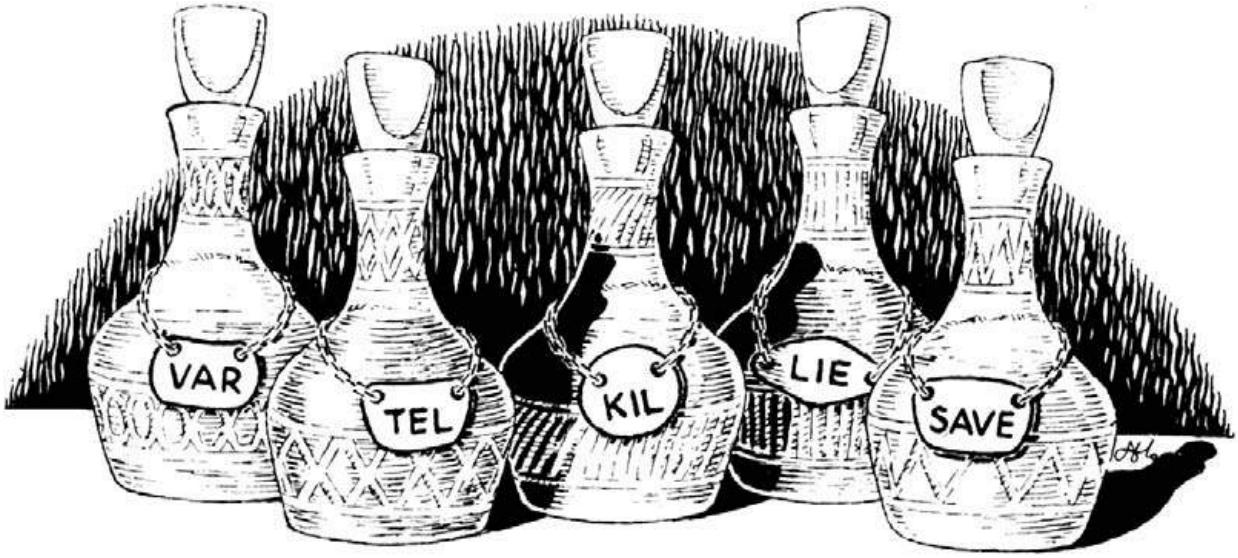
You take out the length of rope that Frowellyn gave you, and, uncoiling it, examine it carefully. You are sure that it must have some magical properties, though you do not know what. But as you test it for strength, frowning, the rope suddenly takes on a life of its own; it moves in your hands, then begins to snake upwards, until the end of it is level with the open doorway above you. It seems not to be attached to anything, but when you tug at it, it is quite taut and, apparently, secure. Wondering, you begin to climb up the rope – but a little over half-way, you smell burning, and see a thin plume of smoke drifting up. A glance down, and you see that the rope is smouldering to ashes. The last couple of feet are already burnt away, and the dim red spark is steadily moving upwards!

With just a hint of panic, you haul yourself up the remaining distance, hand-over-hand, as it smoulders like a fuse. Reaching the top, you hurl yourself through the open doorway as the last of the rope disintegrates into ashes, and catch your breath.

An amused voice bids you good-day, and you look up to see a calm-eyed man seated in an ornate chair. A table is set beside him, though there is no-one else in the room, and you get slowly to your feet. The man's eyes are still on you, his chiselled features showing little. "Please sit down," he says. "My name is Chunk – so good of you to call." Turn to **176**.

31

This jar glows brightly before sinking into the table, taking with it the golden star. Now you must decide which shape to place into the next jar – turn to **135**.



32

Taking the potion from your backpack, you empty it at a gulp. The captain watches you puzzled, but his expression changes when you tell him there is a cache of treasure buried in the sands on the West coast of Nanglidia. He looks doubtful at first, but then to your relief, declares that he has changed his plans. He will sail for Nanglidia at once. You leave the cabin smiling to yourself, as he leans out of his door and shouts orders to his crew. There is no dissent, and a few minutes later the anchor is raised and the ship leaves the harbour, her sails filling with the steady breeze, her timbers creaking rhythmically as her bows cut into the waves of the open sea.

You are heading East, and, grinning to yourself, you hope that what Frowellyn said about the victim soon forgetting any lie is true. Otherwise, you think to yourself, you are soon going to have to deal with a very disappointed and angry captain. Turn to **165**.

33

Soon, the path widens, and you realise that your footprints are leaving deep impressions in the damp moss underfoot. It takes a few seconds before you realise that you are sinking deeper with each step, and, before you can turn back, you find yourself knee-deep in muddy water.

The more you struggle, the deeper you sink, and in seconds the clinging mud has reached your waist. Trying not to panic, you desperately cast around for some chance of escape – and are greatly relieved to see an overhanging branch, just above your head. But with each attempt to reach it, you only fall back deeper into the dragging mud. Throw two dice: if the score is greater than, or the same as, your Dexterity score, turn to **161**. If the score is less than your current Dexterity, turn to **123**.

34

With a shock, you realise that the floor of this corridor is behaving very oddly indeed. It is hard to keep your balance, until you become aware of what is happening – the floor itself is moving, carrying you steadily Eastwards with it. Your rate of progress is steadily increasing, you note, as you see a crossroads approaching – turn to 68.

35

The corridor soon ends at a low archway, and you lower yourself cautiously through. Sudden movement catches your eye as you duck under the archway, and, standing upright again on the other side you face a surprised and frightened-looking Hobgoblin.

He has apparently been sitting on a low, three-legged stool, between two doors, one on your left, and one on your right as you face him, set into the South wall.

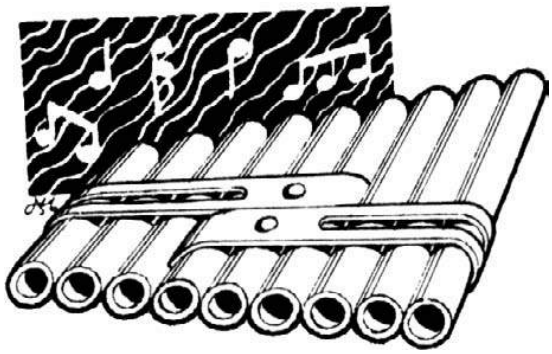
Ugly and pathetic, he cowers against the wall, gibbering: “Oh please, please spare my miserable life, Mighty One! In truth, I am not

worthy to stand in the same room as you, Brave Warrior, but I can help you, I can be of some small assistance, if only you would be so merciful as to . . .” His whining voice trails away as he sees your sword-point approaching his heart, and you consider what to do now. You trust him barely as far as you can see him – however, it is possible he might aid you. Will you:

Kill him now, and look around?	Turn to **195**
Press him for information?	Turn to **99**

36

Suspiciously, you take a small sip of the wine, and are pleasantly surprised, as it tastes fine! You take a longer drink from the bottle, before putting it back, and turning to leave through the exit in the East wall, in fine spirits. Add four Strength points, and turn to **223**.



37

You drink the potion, and feel renewed vitality flood through you, as you concentrate your mind on the blue casket, and telepathically bring it down. This time, you first place the small box on the floor, a foot or so away from you, and gingerly lift the lid with your sword – but there is no cause for alarm: the lid lifts, and inside, you see a set of pan-pipes. Bemused, you take them out and put them in your backpack, wondering what, if anything, is their purpose. One casket now remains: if you wish to investigate the red casket, you will need a third potion of Tel, as this one has already worn off. If you have a third, and wish to use it now, turn to **152**. Otherwise, you will have to look for a way out of this room – turn to **224**.

38

A little further South, and you come to the corridor on your right down which you passed only a few minutes ago. Not much further ahead of you is the room in which you met Dreadthread – the door is just visible at the end of the torch-lit corridor. It seems that the only thing to do now is to head back West again – turn to **127**.

39

You take the potion of Kil from your backpack, and drink it. At once, your agility and vigour are greatly enhanced, and you may add three Dexterity points and four Strength points for this battle – turn to **197**.

40

Looking steadily at the red casket, you will it easily away from its shelf and lift it down gently towards you, grasping it firmly as it floats down into your hands. With some apprehension, you lift the lid, but there is no cause for alarm: inside, a beautifully-made silver dagger nestles in a bed of velvet. You take it out, still cautious, and look at it closely; it is obviously of considerable value, and you place it safely in your backpack. Now, there are the other two caskets to consider: if you have another potion of Tel, you could bring down one of the others. If not, then all you can do now is try to find a way out of this room – turn to **224**. If you have more Tel and wish to use it, you must now decide which casket to bring down. If you choose the blue casket, turn to **196**; if the yellow one, turn to **55**.

41

With a rapid reflex action, you catch the jar before it hits the floor, and replace it on the shelf. You leave more carefully this time, back into the main store-room, and over to the door in the East wall. Turn to **98**.

42

Despite all your efforts, you are unable to open the metal box, or to get out whatever is rattling inside it. Deciding that it might be worth taking it with you anyway, you try to put it into your backpack – first one way, then another – but it seems that however you try to place it, it is always just too large. Annoyed, you finally give up and leave the box on the floor, turning to look at the North wall again – turn to **86**.

43

Bringing down the third casket by the power of your mind, as the new potion takes effect, you grasp it firmly and lift the lid. A cloud of stinging dust erupts from it, burning your face and hands; dropping the casket, you rub your streaming eyes and stagger blindly round the room, choking. Lose three Strength points. Eventually, you are able to see and breathe more or less normally again, and now begin looking for a way out of this room – turn to **224**.

44

You wake, and instantly are fully alert. However, nothing seems to have changed, the room looks exactly the same, though the woman in white has gone. You feel greatly refreshed – gain five Strength points – and wonder how long you have slept. Yawning and stretching, you stroll over to the doorway – the wide staircase has completely vanished, and the library is in darkness! Turning back, you rub your eyes, and look around again; you try the door in the East wall that the woman in white entered by. It opens, and you go through into a corridor heading East. Turn to **34**.

45

Back North again, you remove the keys from the dead jailer, and rapidly unlock the prisoners. You have to push your way gently through them, as they press in on you, thanking you repeatedly, and it is not long before you see that there is a door in the East wall of this dungeon.

It takes a little while, as you try each key in turn, before you discover the one that opens the door. Having done so, you lead the prisoners quickly out, along a dark and narrow tunnel that steadily climbs upwards. After what seems an age, you see daylight ahead, and hurry towards it, your ragged party staggering behind you.

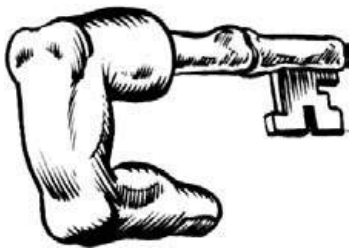
You emerge into daylight, outside a small, stone building. To the South-West, the Weaver's house is shimmering, changing shape, collapsing . . . his power is over. Turn to **225**.

46

Your hands tighten about the thing's throat, and it sinks slowly to the ground, now just a small pool of obnoxious flesh, as you release your grasp. But one thing remains in this steaming, liquid mass – a small key.

You pick it up and look at it, shuddering: it seems to have been fashioned from a human finger-bone! Swiftly, you turn to leave, only to discover that the door through which you entered is now firmly closed. However, there is a slot on this side of the door, and you try the key: at once, the door seems to shimmer and fade, you have a vague impression of a shadowy figure, and then you wake, as though from a dream, clutching the grisly key. A moment or two, and you are in control of yourself again, walking South back down the corridor, until you reach the junction that you passed only a little earlier. Will you now go:

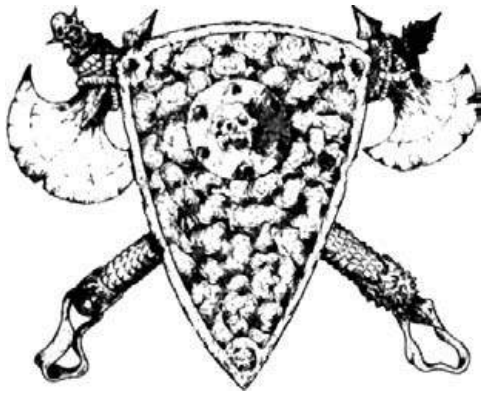
East? Turn to **171**
Or carry on South? Turn to **84**



47

The captain snorts with contempt as you outline your mission. "*Those* galoots!" he says scornfully. "Too scared to go over there themselves, so they send you. Are they paying you well?" You ignore this, and repeat your request for passage East, pointing out that it is for the good of his people that you are attempting this quest. The captain glowers, and shuffles over to look at his charts; for all his fighting talk, you get the impression that he is none too keen to travel to Nanglidia himself. "I head South," he mutters, "and the people of the lands there are trouble enough." You realise there is no point in attacking or threatening him, as without his co-operation you are lost. You wait, and he turns to you again: "Very well," he says, exasperated. "Ten gold pieces, and I will take you East. And sail away at once, and good luck to you!"

If you have ten gold pieces, and are willing to pay the captain, turn to **102**. Your only other option is to try the spell Lie. If you have a potion of Lie, turn to **32**. If you have neither enough gold, nor the potion, your quest has ended here.



48

You soon have to struggle, as this path is overgrown, and the trees do their best to shut out the moonlight, as their branches meet above you. But soon you see that there is a way to your left. Will you now:

Try the new way West? Turn to **145**
Continue North? Turn to **94**

49

Telling yourself that this massive character is merely imaginary, you walk calmly forwards. But as he swings the double-bladed axe in a whistling arc, you instinctively raise your shield to defend yourself. Throw two dice. If you throw 2 to 9, turn to **12**. If you throw 10 to 12, turn to **61**.

50

You examine the door in the East wall carefully; there is no handle or keyhole, and you give it a tentative prod with your sword. It at once swings easily wide-open, and you walk though into what is obviously some kind of food store – or was once a food store, as the smell from the mouldy bread, decaying animal carcasses and over-ripe cheeses assaults you.

About to step out again, you are knocked stumbling forwards by a fierce blow between your shoulder-blades – lose two Strength points – and turn to face your assailant. Her face twisted into an evil snarl, and firmly grasping a meat-cleaver, an old woman shuffles towards you. "More meat for Grenschetch!" she leers, raising the cleaver, and her ragged cloak billows out as you close in to fight. You swiftly discover, as her cleaver and your sword clash, that she uses her cloak skilfully, like a gladiator's net, and your movements are hampered by the piles of rotting food.

Backing off for a moment, you hurl cheeses and green loaves at her, giving yourself some time and space. If you have them, this might be a good time to try some magic potions: you could try Var – turn to **136**; or Kil – turn to **193**. You feel instinctively that Lie would not work here, as Grenschetch pushes her way through the debris, uttering threats and giggling insanely.

If you do not have the potions, or do not wish to use them here, you fight now.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
GRENSCHETCH:	9	12

If you defeat her, turn to 116.

51

With great care, as quietly as you are able, you push aside the tough branches. The sound is more distinct now, a kind of warbling, and you soon see its source. Above you, deeply shadowed but staring at you unblinking, is an owl. It continues its low cooing, and you gradually detect as you stand entranced, what sounds like a word: "South," it seems the owl is saying, though the rest of its song is unintelligible to you.

You back away to the path, and look about you – but the woods to the South seem, if anything, denser than those North. You continue East, Watching for a track on your right. Turn to **7**.

52

Most intelligent humanoids will believe any plausible lie you can invent, once you have drunk this. And though they are likely to do as you ask, they will forget, within a few minutes, what lie you have told them. Turn to **26**.

53

Nervously, you place the triangle in the jar. There is a dull glow, and the jar sinks slowly into the table-top, leaving no sign of its former presence. Mystified, you consider the next jar in the row: turn to **118**.

54

Not far along this corridor, you see that a passage leads off to your left. Will you now:

Go West?	Turn to **127**
Continue North?	Turn to **117**

55

The effects of the first potion wore off very quickly, but were all that Frowellyn had led you to believe; and so you take out the second potion and drink it. Again, you at once experience that wonderful feeling of power, and, concentrating your mind firmly on the casket, bring it gently down to you. At once, you lift the lid – and a choking cloud of burning dust explodes from inside. Dropping the casket, you stagger, blinded and in pain, about the room – lose three Strength points.

Eventually, much to your relief, you can see normally again, and look up at the last casket. If you have a third potion of Tel, and wish to use it now, turn to **83**. Otherwise you will have to find a way out – turn to **224**.

56

There is a swift exchange of blows, the clash of your sword-blades ringing in the still air. The Thin Man is a fine swordsman, although slightly-built, and you will need to be at your best to defeat him. He stands off for a moment, as though in respect of your own skill, and looks at you coolly. If you have magic potions, and wish to try one, now is your chance – turn to **170**. Otherwise, you close in for battle again – turn to **197**.

57

The Weaver's expression does not change in the slightest, as you tell him the number. But the portcullis in front of you suddenly lifts, and the Weaver rises, beckoning you to follow. Still very suspicious, you enter a tiny room through a door in the West wall, and he grins. The door shuts and the two of you are together; dry-mouthed, you are about to grasp your sword, when the floor drops away; you are falling ... though the tiny room is not moving. As suddenly as this peculiar sensation of falling started, it ends, and you fall in a heap on the floor. The Weaver laughs, long and loud, and opens a door in the North wall. Bewildered, but determined, you rapidly get up and follow him as he strides Northwards down a dark and noisome stone passageway.

Shortly, the passage opens, and you are looking at a row of cells. Unfed, thirsty and ragged men grasp for you, their bony arms pressing through the bars, while a very large man, a row of keys and a dagger at his belt, silently watches. You have found the prisoners. The jailer approaches you, and you get an inkling of danger. He laughs. "Welcome," he says. "The fifty-eighth prisoner."

In sudden cool fury, your mind is working quickly. This jailer is real, as are the prisoners, and the Weaver himself. His reality enables him to create nightmares. In

a blur of movement, you draw your sword and cut down the jailer with three swift strokes. You turn to face the Weaver, but suddenly he seems small and scared, and, as you raise your sword, turns and runs at a remarkable pace back South. Haring after him, you manage to reach the door to the tiny room in which you arrived ahead of him, and now it is your turn to grin unpleasantly! Desperately, the Weaver turns back again, wrenching a large axe from the wall, swinging it at you, as you close. You feel that you are going to enjoy this fight.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
WEAVER:	9	12

If you defeat the Weaver, turn to **45**.

58

Taking a deep breath, you put away your sword, and walk calmly – and straight through – the Wood Man. You let out a sigh of relief, and congratulate yourself on your nerve and judgement. Turn to **80**.

59

Steeling yourself, believing with all your will that you cannot be harmed by nightmares, you walk into the clutches of the monster. You can feel the sweat trickling down your chest as its mighty blood-stained jaws open again, reaching for your throat – but you are quite unharmed. Releasing your pent-up breath in a gasp of relief, you continue walking, straight through the monster, and on South – turn to **168**.

60

The way West turns, after a while, to the North, and ahead of you a long corridor stretches, lit at intervals by torches set into the walls. Carefully, you make your way along it: but something is moving in the shadows ahead of you, and there is a snuffling, growling sound. You draw your sword – turn to **163**.

61

You manage to dodge the axe, your shield deflecting it into the wall. Grunting, Baulk wrenches it out with a great splintering of wood, and raises it again. If he is an illusion, so is everything else! You prepare to fight.

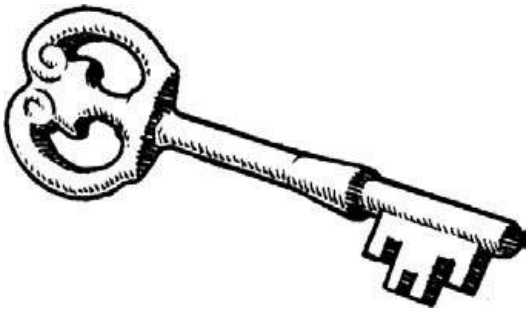
	Dexterity	*Strength*
BAULK:	8	16

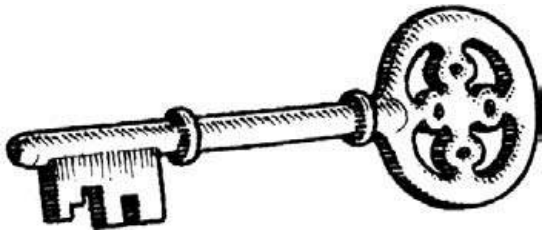
If you win, turn to **212**.

62

Although the path South is narrow, you are able to move fairly easily, and soon you are following it back West, deeper into the woods again. You continue for some way, until you see that there is a still narrower track on your left. There is light and movement that way, like fireflies dancing in the night, and you can feel yourself drawn to it. But then you stop and reconsider. Will you:

Investigate South?	Turn to **26**
Continue West, suspecting a trap?	Turn to **5**





63

As you drain the bottle, you can feel a change coming over you. Thick hair sprouts from your hands, and by the feel of it, your face also. Your arms and legs thicken, bulging with rippling muscles, your whole body strains against your suit of leather armour – you begin to wonder whether this was a good idea. Baulk, however, is gazing at you with wonder, and beginning to look concerned; you close in for the fight. Add five Strength points for your enormous size, but subtract one Dexterity point, as you are now less agile.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
BAULK:	8	16

If you win, turn to **82**.

64

Soon the corridor turns to the East, and after a short while, back South. A door is open at the end of this passage, and you go through into a small, cobwebbed, candle-lit room. Turn to **130**.

65

It is not long before the path South turns East, and you follow it to a junction. Will you now go:

South?	Turn to **173**
Or continue East?	Turn to **206**

66

A little further on, you arrive at a crossroads. There are corridors leading away to your right and left, as well as straight on, and you have no way of knowing what lies down any of them. Will you now go:

On North?	Turn to **190**
East?	Turn to **159**
West?	Turn to **177**

67

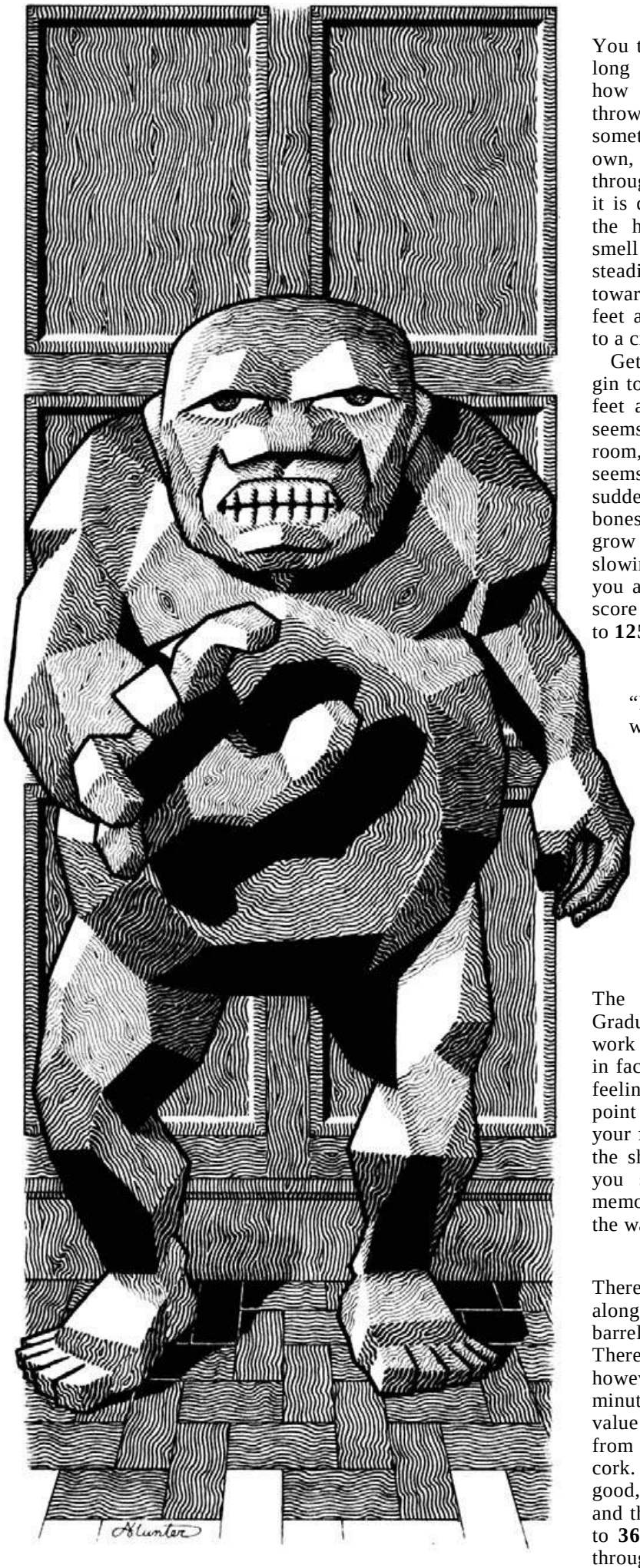
As you look about, you gradually realise that everything in here is made of wood – not just the tables and chairs, but the jugs and plates on them, the glasses, even the candles slowly smouldering.

As you are taking this in, you realise, with amazement, that the wall opposite you is moving. You blink, and then see that what is walking towards you, expressionless but threatening, its movements jerky, is a man made entirely of wood. Sword and shield ready, you prepare to defend yourself – this oddity is unarmed, and should, you feel, prove no great hindrance. It occurs to you, as you ready yourself, that this may be another of the Weaver's dream-creatures; will you:

Ignore the Wood Man?	Turn to **58**
Fight now?	Turn to **137**

68

In virtually no time, you are at the crossroads – but the moving floor gives you no time to choose, as you are whisked around the corner and on Northwards, bouncing off the East wall, stumbling and cursing, trying to keep your balance. An archway is coming up ahead of you – turn to **221**.



69

You take out the magic rope that Frowellyn gave you, so long ago, it now seems, and slowly uncoil it, unsure of how it will help you. You have vague thoughts of throwing it upwards, in the hope that it will catch on something, but the rope suddenly takes on a life of its own, snaking up out of your hands and disappearing through the hatch above. Puzzled, you tug on the rope – it is quite firm, and you are soon climbing up it towards the hatchway. You have almost reached it when you smell burning, and look down to see that the rope is steadily smouldering away, the small spark running up towards you. Hastily, you haul yourself up the last few feet and tumble through the hatchway, as the rope burns to a cinder.

Getting to your feet, you realise how cold it is. You begin to shiver as you look round, and in moments feel your feet and hands beginning to go numb. The empty room seems to be made entirely of marble; it is a long, narrow room, but there is an open doorway at the Eastern end. It seems a terribly long way away, as the cold becomes suddenly much more intense, biting through to your bones. Even as you watch, frost and icicles form, and grow rapidly. You struggle Eastwards, your footsteps slowing, forcing yourself onwards, as you know now that you are rapidly freezing to death. Throw two dice: if the score is greater than your current Strength score, turn to **125**. If equal or less, turn to **179**.

70

"No," says the Weaver quietly. And without warning, a third portcullis slams into the floor behind you, as the Weaver sits back in his chair, happily watching. Another, equally lethally pointed, pierces the floor just in front of you. More drop in turn, behind and in front of you . . . there is hardly room to move now, as more drop from above, and you realise that your fate is to be impaled here, so close . . . your quest is over.

71

The ceiling is gently spinning, not quite in focus. Gradually, it becomes still; you lie unmoving, trying to work out where you are and how badly you are hurt – but in fact, apart from a few bruises and a shaky, slightly sick feeling, you appear to be all right. Lose one Dexterity point and two Strength points, as you get unsteadily to your feet. You recognise where you are now: at the end of the short passage South, down which a few minutes ago you so foolishly ventured. Still shuddering from the memory of the fearful room, you swiftly continue West, the way you were originally headed. Turn to **185**.

72

There are numerous bottles here, you now see, in racks along the walls, as well as a fair number of cobwebbed barrels. It seems that you are in the wine and ale store. There is a way out, you see, an archway in the East wall; however, you first have a good look around. A few minutes' search convinces you that there is nothing of value here, but out of curiosity, you lift one of the bottles from its rack, blow off the years of dust and remove the cork. It certainly smells like wine – in fact, it smells rather good, and you are tempted to take a drink. Then you stop and think again. If you decide to risk a drink of wine, turn to **36**; if you prefer to leave the wine alone, and go out through the East portal, turn to **223**.

73

The magical power of this potion is strong, and it is a wonderful feeling, as, by the power of your mind alone, you lift the yellow casket down from the shelf, and float it through the air and into your waiting hands. Eagerly, you lift the lid – and a cloud of choking, stinging dust explodes from the box, blinding and burning you. Lose three Strength points.

You drop the casket and stagger back, your eyes streaming and your lungs burning, cursing under your breath. You are greatly relieved when, after a few minutes, you can see and breathe normally again, and look at the other two caskets on the shelf. The potion has, you can feel, worn off already, and you will need more if you are to fetch down the others. If you have more potions of Tel, and wish to risk using this power again, then you must choose which casket to try next: if the blue one, turn to **37**: if the red, turn to **140**. If you have no more, you will have to try to find a way out of this room – turn to **224**.

74

You soon reach a junction, and the corridors look familiar. South, you can just see the door leading from the room in which you met Dreadthread, and so your only real options are to head North – turn to **117**, or turn around and go back West – turn to **127**.

75

You make a wild grab for the jar as it falls, but it tumbles out of your grasp and smashes to pieces on the floor. You jump back in the little room, expecting a nasty surprise – but it is quite the opposite: gleaming among the broken pieces of the jar is a piece of metal! You pick it up immediately: it has inscribed in it the letters 'PDAJ', and you put this token at once into your backpack. You examine the other pots and jars a second time, more carefully now, but there are no more tokens here, and so, pleased with your lucky discovery, you go out, back into the main store room and past the body of the dreadful Grenschetch, and over to the door in the East wall. Turn to **98**.

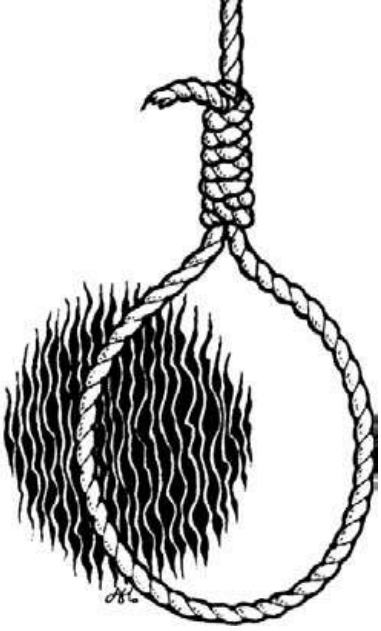
76

The door at the top opens at your touch, and you look into a luxurious, softly-lit room. Heavy drapes mask the North wall, and intricate tapestries adorn the others. A wide couch, to one side, has downy blankets turned aside; the air is gently perfumed.

A door on the East side of the room opens slowly, and you turn, feeling strangely at peace; the young woman who enters greets you, her voice soft. Her flowing dress of pure white silk falls about her, as she moves a couple of paces into the room and smiles gently. "You should rest here for a moment," she suggests. "You have come from afar, and fought hard. You are weary." As she speaks, you realise, as though for the first time, just how tired you are. Your limbs are like lead, and your eyes burn with exhaustion. You sit on the couch and close your eyes . . . to rest, to sleep, just for a few minutes, you tell yourself, would refresh you so much . . . then, on the brink of sleep, you snap back to wakefulness – but the woman has not moved, and seems not at all threatening. "Rest," she repeats, "sleep now."

The thought is hard to resist, but your natural vigilance still urges caution. What to do now? Will you:

Lie down and sleep for a while?	Turn to **44**
Go back down to the library?	Turn to **100**



77

This is no illusion, you realise, as you attempt to walk through the spectral creature. Its rotting face presses close to your own as it clasps you in its three arms, and you feel the life-force draining from your body – your last memory is of a diseased, gaping mouth closing . . . your quest is over.

78

It is not yet dawn, the pale moon sits low in the sky as you are roughly kicked awake. About to leap to your feet, you freeze, propped up on your elbows, as you look up at a circle of tall, unsmiling men. Swords drawn, they stare at you for several seconds, saying nothing, shadowed and menacing against the sombre sky. Then one kicks away your sword, and you are dragged roughly to your feet. Your arms and wrists are swiftly and expertly tied behind you, the thin cord cutting into your skin, and you are pushed forward. "This way!" commands one of the men, and at his signal you are force-marched North, over the tough sandy grasses of the headland, encouraged by occasional blows from the others.

You arrive at what looks like an old barn, and are pushed inside. On a raised platform at the end, facing you, is an old, drawn man, clothed in a scarlet cloak and bewigged. Torches splutter fitfully behind him, giving off pungent smoke as he regards you; he gives a funereal smile, and commands, "Step forward, prisoner!"

Again encouraged by the guards, you stumble towards him, until you are standing a few feet away. He stares down at you, then quietly asks, "Charge?"

"Would take ship, my Lord, and travel to Nanglidia," you hear from behind. "A spy. One who plots against the power and cunning of the Weaver. Armed –" your precious sword is thrown casually to the ground. "An assassin perhaps."

Your protests are abruptly cut off, as the judge booms: "There is but one penalty for such actions. Death!" There is a sudden flurry of activity, as heavy plain curtains behind the judge are flung aside, revealing a gallows. Horrified, struggling and kicking, you are dragged and pulled forward, half-carried up the wooden steps to the platform. A burly, unshaven man dressed in black waistcoat and trousers, and a black skullcap, leers, and places the noose over your head. He steps back, as do the guards. You can see the judge's face – he has turned to watch, his expression now quite open and contented. The hangman pulls the lever, and the trapdoor crashes open. Turn to **220**.

79

The bright moon lights the path, and you move easily and confidently; though it is not long before you see that there is a narrow track to the South. Straining your eyes, you try to make out what it is that is causing a strange movement, dozens of tiny spots of white light dancing in the deep shadows that way. You can make out movement now, as well, a figure just discernible. You push through the leaves and branches warily, intrigued by this. Turn to **26**.

80

Your self-congratulations end suddenly. There is the sound of steady marching feet, the clank of armour, and the low, repetitive murmur of a marching-song. The noise is coming from the South, and a second later, the door is flung open, and a dozen armed creatures enter. They have the faces of frogs, but the paws of large cats, and are carrying pikes and spears.

You are surrounded, but they do not attack. One, evidently the leader of this unearthly band, steps forward: "You are to come with us," he tells you in a deep, gurgling voice, and you feel helpless to resist as a brightly glowing belt is strapped round your waist. There is a cord attached to it, and you are marched swiftly away Northwards, through a door and along a corridor Ahead of you is an ornate archway. Turn to **90**.

81

Treating Glop as though he did not exist, you explore the room. There is an open doorway in the North wall, but first you go back to the West door, and tug at the handle on this side. The door is shut firmly. Glop shrugs apologetically: "I did warn you," he says sorrowfully. "You can go out the North way, but soon you'll be back here with me – if you're lucky."

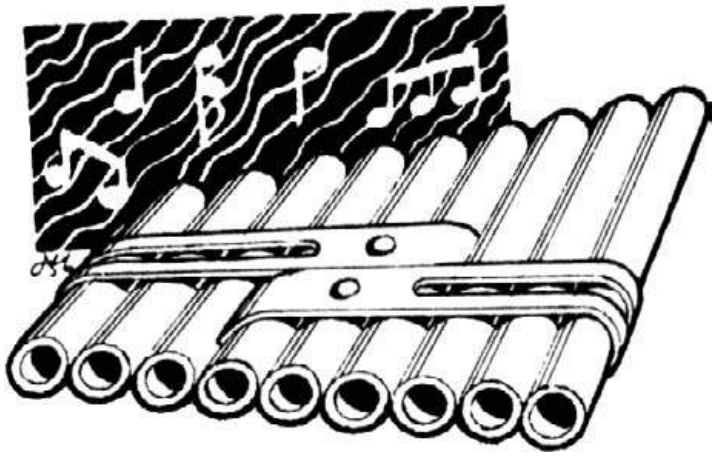
Although exasperating, it appears that there is little else you can do, and so you cross the room to leave by the exit in the North wall. You walk easily along a well-lit corridor North until, after a while, it turns to the West. Continuing, you can see that not far ahead, there appears to be a junction, or crossroads – turn to **213**.

82

The battle over, you are relieved as your body slowly returns to normal. Restore the Dexterity point you subtracted, and turn to **212**.

83

Downing the third potion, you telepathically fetch down the blue casket, and gingerly lift the lid: but inside is neither treasure or a trap, but a set of plain pan-pipes. Slightly perplexed, you put the pipes into your backpack, and begin looking for a way out of the room, as there appears to be nothing else to investigate. Turn to **224**.



84

Not far further, and you see the way off to the West that you saw before. At the end of the corridor directly ahead of you is the room in which you met Dreadthread, and so you turn right to try the way West. Turn to **127**.

85

The casket you are holding is blue. Warily, you lift the lid to look inside – and discover only a set of very plain pan-pipes. Disappointed, you nevertheless stow them safely in your backpack, and begin to look for a way out – turn to **224**.

86

Examining the panel in the wall more closely, you see that there are handles set into the bottom of it, close to the floor, one on each side. Grasping them firmly, you lift, and the panel slides smoothly upwards, allowing you to crawl through into the passageway beyond. It drops back into place as you squeeze through, merging into the rest of the wall on this side, and you get to your feet. You are at the end of a corridor heading North, and you can just make out a junction at the end of it. You move rapidly up to the junction and consider which way to go now. Will you go:

East? Turn to **110**
West? Turn to **142**

87

Dreadthread laughs, a great whooping, gleeful laugh, as the candles flicker, and his image slowly fades. Without warning, a broken chair flies from a corner of the room, and as you duck, it catches you a glancing blow on the shoulder. In moments the room is filled with flying tables, window-frames, broken sticks of furniture . . . a strong wind from nowhere wraps cobwebs round your face, the candles are extinguished.

Alone in the dark in this mad room, you try to protect yourself against the furniture smashing all about you, as the wind howls and Dreadthread's inane laughter echoes. Blind, you stagger helplessly, swinging your sword – your quest is over.

88

Walking back North, you feel quite cheerful. You have no idea how much time has passed, but, judging by the moon's position, it is very little. Passing back through the clearing in which you encountered Frowellyn, you push aside twigs and leaves until you are back on the path. Following her advice unthinkingly, you head West. Turn to **5**.

89

Picking one of the best-looking specimens, you give a sniff, and take a small, uncertain bite. The flavour fills your mouth, and you eat a little more. Your tiredness almost at once drains out of you, and you feel invigorated and clear-headed. Gain four Strength points. Your step springy, you continue on your way – turn to **121**.

90

The bright belt seems to be tightening about your waist as you are led under the archway, the guards keeping their pikes and spears a few inches from your body. The room you now enter is brightly-lit and resplendent with silk tapestries and paintings hung on the walls, crystal and gold candle-holders, deep soft rugs upon the floor, and a number of beautifully-carved but grotesque statuettes around the room.

On a dais in front of you is an equally grotesque sight: on a chair, the back of which is carved in the form of a bat-winged being, sits a creature with the features of a bull-frog, the paws of a lion, and a long bushy tail. He carries a kind of wand, bearing the symbol of a shield and crossed swords, and glares balefully at you, his bulbous eyes unblinking. "I am Batrachian," he tells you, "King of this domain; and you are an intruder. What is your business here?"

In as brave a voice as you can manage, you tell the Frog King that you are an adventurer, and come looking for the Weaver of Nightmares. Batrachian throws back his head and laughs, an unpleasant gurgle, deep in his throat. "I am old, young Stranger," he croaks eventually, "and I have seen many such as you in my life. Many more have never reached this room – and few have left it alive." He seems to ponder on this for a moment, shaking his head ruefully, and the belt tightens again – lose one Strength point.

"How old am I?" the Frog King continues, seemingly musing to himself; then he raises his voice, looking directly at you once more: "I will tell you. I am half as old as this house of the Weaver." He throws back his saurian head and gives another hoarse, croaking laugh, "and sixty years ago, I was one-fifth as old as this house will be two hundred and forty years from now." He smiles indulgently: "do tell me my age – but think quickly!"

His mocking laughter begins roaring like the sea in your ears, as the belt tightens another notch – it is becoming difficult to breathe, and you suddenly realise, as the Frog King continues laughing, that you will gradually have the life squeezed out of you if you cannot answer his question. Lose two more Strength points, and another two for each minute it takes you to solve the problem. When you have worked out the Frog King's age, adjust your Strength score, and – if you are still alive – turn to the section with the same number.

91

You come to a solid door, brass-bound and studded with iron rivets. However, there is a keyhole. Have you got a red key? If so, turn to **10**. If not, turn to **181**.

92

The Spearwing dead at your feet, you stand ready, bloodied sword in hand, as the others hover and wheel above you. But it seems that, for the moment at least, you have driven them off, as they make no immediate attempt to attack you, and you move swiftly East.

Soon you come to a junction in the woods, and must choose which direction to take now. Will you go:

North? Turn to **162**
South? Turn to **103**

93

The sky turns red and purple, banded with dark cloud, as morning arrives. Tired and unnerved almost at the beginning of your quest, you clamber down to the quayside, now bustling with activity as the sun creeps over the horizon, reflected in the dark sea.

You are ignored as crewmen and traders hurry about, calling to each other in cheerless voices. Pushing your way through them, you walk to the end of the jetty. The ship is almost ready to sail, the last of its cargo being lashed down, and sails unfurled. Jumping down onto the deck, you ask the first crewman you see for the captain. Barely looking up from his task, he points to the stern,

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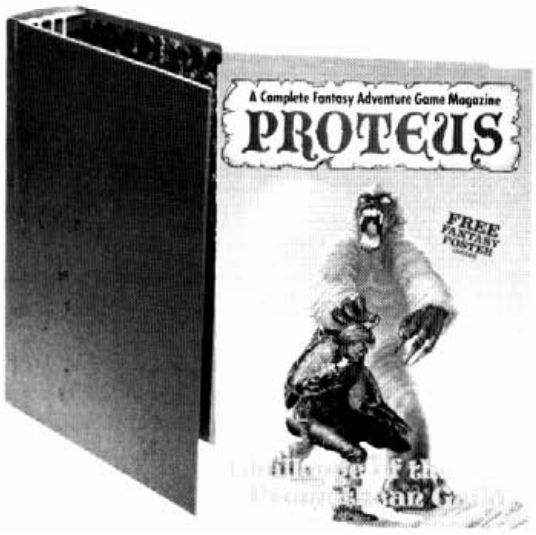

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and you pick your way down the ship. The raised stern section has leaded windows, and brightly-painted wooden doors, and you knock several times. “What you want!” a rough voice bellows, and you go through.

The captain’s cabin is strewn with maps and charts, and an unmade bunk is against one wall. Several barrels are lashed to the other side, and on one of them sits the captain. He takes another drink from the bottle he holds, wipes his mouth with the back of his hand, and glares at you. “State your business,” he snarls, “I’ve a ship to get away.”

This, you feel, is not a very promising start. However, if you are to get to Nanglidia, you are going to have to somehow persuade, bully or bribe this character into taking you. Turn to **47**.

94

Very soon, you reach a junction. The thicket ahead of you looks impenetrable, though the way to your left and your right both look good. Will you go:

East?	Turn to **206**
West?	Turn to **172**

95

You put away your sword and wipe your brow, feeling more than a tinge of sadness, and considerable respect for Chunk, who fought so hard and cleverly with his bare hands and feet. Looking down at the body, you see a white key round his neck, like a pendant. Closing his eyes, you take the key: it is quite plain, with no markings or inscription on it, but you put it in your backpack – you are sure you will find a use for it later.

The open doorway to the South gives onto a sheer forty-foot drop, and so you leave at once through an opening in the North wall. Turn to **129**.

96

Gritting your teeth, telling yourself that you cannot be harmed by nightmares, you walk straight into the monster’s waiting arms, your face a few inches from its bloodstained fangs. A mighty paw swings towards you – and straight through your body! You are quite unharmed! Laughing with relief, you continue walking, straight through this horribly-real illusion. Turn to **113**.

97

The blade of the dagger slides into the slot as though made for it, and after a few minutes of tipping and shaking the box, a small, rectangular piece of metal slips out. Eagerly, you pick it up – it is clearly inscribed with the letters, ‘DKH’. You put this at once into your backpack – you have found another of the Weaver’s tokens! After a last, careful look around the stone-floored room again, to ensure you have missed nothing else, you turn your attention back to the North wall – turn to **86**.

98

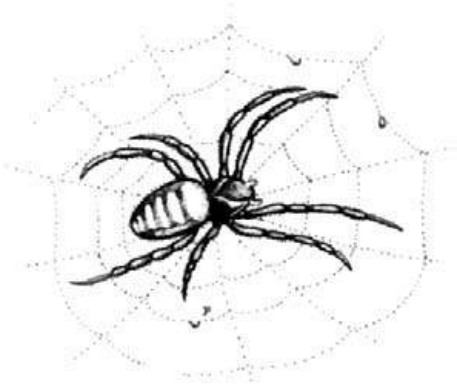
The door opens easily when you push it, and swings shut again at once, blending into its wood surround, and you walk into an airless room, poorly-lit by a few spluttering candles hung from the high ceiling. Dust rises as you move, getting into your nose and eyes, the floor is littered with old sacking; gradually, your eyes become more used to the gloom and dust, and you take a better look around – turn to **72**.

99

There is no need for you to threaten the terrified Hobgoblin further, as he is almost on his knees, gabbling that the door on your right is safe, though the left is not. Will you believe him? Turn to **138** if so. Alternatively, you could try a little magic: if you have a potion of Trip, then making the Hobgoblin drink it could reveal the truth of what he says. If you have a potion of Trip, and wish to try it, turn to **153**.

100

Despite the tremendous weariness you feel, you back away, and return down the staircase. But as you do so, a mist rises from the floor, and you realise that the staircase is evaporating, even as you watch. You run down the stairs, tumbling to the floor as the heavy mist rolls upwards; you see that the same thing is happening to the left-hand staircase, and in a few moments they have both disappeared completely, the dense mist hanging above you on the North side of the library. There is only one way to get any further now, it seems, and that is via the hatchway in the ceiling – still there, you are glad to see. If you have the rope, turn to **69**. If not, turn to **198**.



101

You quickly discover that the path turns South, and, after a short time, East. You follow it, moving quickly, for time is getting short, though you pick your steps with care, and keep an eye to either side of you.

A strong, rather pleasant smell makes you pause in your stride; you sniff the air again – it is something like parsley, or sage. You soon realise where the aroma comes from: there are a number of large, mushroom-like plants at the side of the track, some pink and some green, though the moonlight makes it hard to tell precisely what colour they are in the day. Nor can you tell which plant is giving the pleasant smell – it could be either, or both. You are tempted to try one, but are naturally cautious about eating wild mushrooms. However, they do look tasty. Will you try:

A pink mushroom?	Turn to **200**
A green one?	Turn to **89**
Neither, but carry on East?	Turn to **121**

102

You hand over the gold, and the captain turns back to his charts. Out of his cabin again, you stand on deck and watch as the final preparations are made, and amid much shouting and joking, the anchor is raised, rattling and clanking against the hull. In a few more minutes, the sails are straining and clapping in the wind, and the ship moves away from the shelter of the harbour. You move up to the bow, watching the white water coursing past the hull, feeling the spray in your face. You are heading due East. Turn to **165**.

103

As you press deeper into the wood, you begin to become concerned about the time. Glancing at the moon, you can see that dawn is still some way off, but you realise that you have no time to waste. The track turns East, and you hurry along it, pushing aside twigs that snag at you.

A sound to your left halts you: it is difficult to tell whether the fleeting noise is simply the wind breathing through the trees, or something more sinister. Will you hurry past? Turn to **7** if so; or stop to investigate? Turn to **51**.

104

A healing medicine. When you drink it, your wounds will be healed, and your energy restored. You may use this whenever you wish, and it returns your *Strength* score to its initial level. Turn to **26**.

105

A faintness overcomes you as you move to drop the disc into the jar; the room is swimming, it is an effort even to stand. Lose two Strength points.

When the room comes back into focus again, you see that the disc is lying on the table top; evidently, your choice was wrong, and you replace the disc in the shallow dish to think again: turn to **29**.

106

The corridor North ends fairly soon, and you find yourself facing a brick wall. However, there is a light from above, and looking up, you see what appears to be an open doorway in the brickwork some thirty or forty feet above your head.

It takes only a minute or two for you to discover that you have no hope of scaling the sheer wall, and you step back a pace or two to look again. Do you have a coil of rope? If so, turn to **30**. If not, you have little choice but to return South to the junction – turn to **166**.

107

You try the grisly key in the keyhole – it seems to fit, and as you turn it in the lock there is a gentle click. Exactly as before, you become dizzy for a second, and seem to simply pass through the door; on the other side of it, you take stock: you are in a small, apparently empty room – and you no longer have the key.

You walk slowly around the stone-floored room, unsure what to do next. Looking up, you see that there is a narrow shelf along the length of the West wall, set some fifteen feet or more above your head. You can just make out some caskets on the shelf – however, you have no hope of reaching them unaided. If you have a potion of Tel, and wish to use it here, turn to **157**. If you have a rope given you by Frowellyn, and would rather attempt to reach the caskets with that, turn to **108**. If you have neither, all you can do now is try to find a way out – turn to **224**.

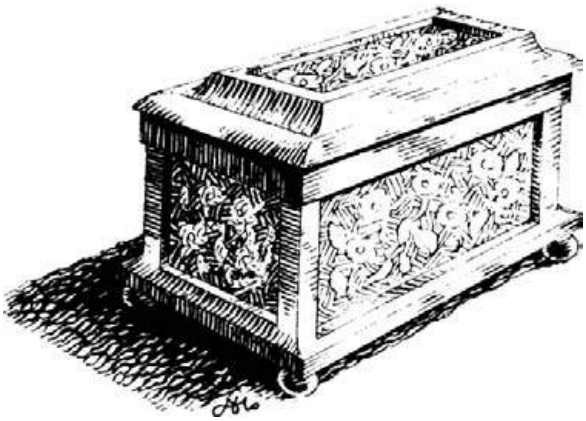
108

Although Frowellyn told you that you would need this length of rope, you are unsure quite what its properties are, or how best to use it. As you are considering this, however, holding the coil of rope, it begins to unwind of its own accord, and snakes slowly upwards, until the top of it is level with the shelf. You tug on the rope, astonished as it seems to be suspended in the air: it is taut, and when you lift your feet, it easily takes your weight.

You begin climbing, hand-over-hand, towards the

caskets; but as you near the shelf, you see a thin plume of smoke drifting up past your face, and smell burning. Looking down, you see that the rope is steadily smouldering, like a fuse, and the dim spark is advancing, leaving only ashes behind it. As fast as you can, you climb to the top: you just have time to see that there are three different-coloured caskets as you reach out and grab one with one hand, before rapidly descending. About eight feet from the ground, the rope now ends, still smouldering, and you have to drop to the floor. Fortunately, you land well, and are unhurt, and watch as the remainder of the mysterious rope sizzles away to ashes.

You have time now to examine the casket you grabbed, still tightly clutched under your arm. Throw one dice, to discover what colour you managed to take: if you throw 1 or 2, turn to **14**. If you throw 3 or 4, turn to **85**; if 5 or 6, turn to **112**.



109

This passageway turns to the West again after a short time, and so you walk West until you come to a door. It opens quite easily, and you enter the room beyond – turn to **67**.

110

You have not gone far East before you pass through an open doorway and into a light, airy room. One wall is lined with shields, bearing many different coats of arms, and against the others are neatly placed a great variety of swords, axes, spears, halberds, daggers, and pikes. Standing motionless opposite you is a tall, thin man, a long cloak draped over his shoulders. You face each other, saying nothing, until the Thin Man abruptly shrugs aside his cloak, and, still silent, advances, a rapier pointed at your heart. If you believe he is real, turn to **56**. If you believe he is an illusion, turn to **150**.

111

A little further West, and you reach the end of this corridor. However, there are passages to your right and left. Will you now go:

North?	Turn to **169**
South?	Turn to **35**

112

You are holding a yellow casket. You lift the lid – and a cloud of searing, choking dust explodes in your face. You drop the casket, knocked back by the force of the small blast, your eyes burning, streaming with tears, and your face and hands afire. Lose three Strength points, as, slowly, your breathing and vision become more or less normal again. Cursing, and still rubbing your eyes, you look about you to see if there is anything else of interest in this room – and think about leaving: turn to **224**.

113

You continue North up the narrow corridor, which soon turns to the East. A little way along, there is a corridor leading off to the South. Will you:

Try the way South?	Turn to **151**
Continue East?	Turn to **110**

114

Will you fight the Mawgrind with sword and shield, or use a magic potion, if you have any? To fight now, turn to **155**. To try magic turn to 210.

115

The creature feels real enough, as two of its hands close round your throat, and another grasps your hair. You are pinned to the wall as you wrestle with it, punching and kicking wildly. Turn to **25**.

116

You investigate the room further, now that the awful Grenschetch has been disposed of. The rotting food certainly has no appeal, and there seems to be nothing else of interest in the room, and so you begin looking round for a way out. There is a door in the North wall, and also a door in the East wall, apart from the one to the West through which you entered. Will you now try:

The North door?	Turn to **217**
The East door?	Turn to **98**

117

A little further North, you reach another junction. Will you now:

Take the new way East?	Turn to **171**
Continue North?	Turn to **91**

118

Which object will you place next:

The square?	Turn to **164**
The star?	Turn to **31**
The disc?	Turn to **202**

119

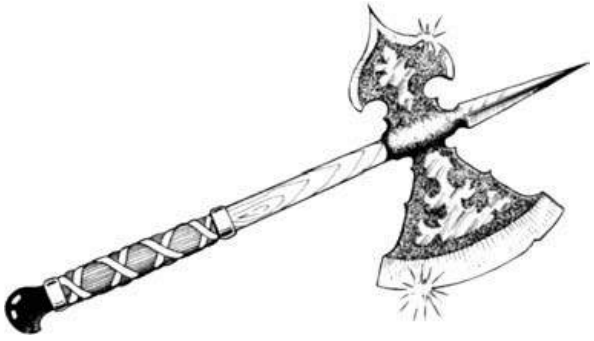
A powerful and deadly example of the sorceress' art. When you drink this potion, you will become strong and swift, a warrior capable of defeating most opponents you are likely to meet. Turn to **26**.

120

Swiftly, you get the potion from your backpack and drink it. There is no obvious change, but you feel a tingling sense of power and athleticism. Add three Dexterity points and four Strength points for the duration of this battle.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
BAULK:	8	16

If you win, turn to **212**.



121

The wood becomes less oppressive as you travel East, and soon the trees are thinning, and you can smell the sea. A little further, and you are clear of the wood altogether, and crossing thin grasses until you arrive at the beach. Looking up and down, you realise that you must be some way South by now, as well as East, of Glengantha, and so you begin walking North along the flat beach, the sea whispering quietly on your right, hoping for sight of the ship.

A glance at the sky tells you that dawn is not more than an hour or two away, but the sand is flat and quite hard, and after not more than half-an-hour's walk, you are rewarded by the sight of a ship at the end of a jetty, riding at anchor. You reach the quayside – there are warehouses, and a number of smaller sheds and merchants' premises.

Passing back through these, you see that there is a gentle slope up to a flat, grassy area overlooking the quay, and so you climb up to rest for a while. Soon, you should be aboard ship and on your way to Nanglidia, you reflect. Your eyes ache, and you close them for a second. A minute later, you are fast asleep. Turn to 78.

122

The trees thin out as you head North, and you feel you must be nearing the edge of the wood. There is the faint sound of running water, and after a minute or two, you see the cause: glittering in the moonlight is a bright stream. You snap off a nearby twig, and test it for depth: a few paces in, it is not much more than ankle-deep, and the opposite bank is not far off. Your stick ahead of you, you slowly wade across; at the centre, the stream is almost waist-high, but the water is not cold, and the level begins to drop again as you approach the opposite shore.

Just as you are beginning to feel safe, you are alerted by a great commotion in the water, and turn to face an Alligator, larger than you have ever seen before – or ever want to see again. It powers towards you, its great limbs sending up plumes of spray with each stroke, and its jaws wide open in anticipation of its next meal!

You will have to fight at once, but because of your precarious position in the water, deduct one Dexterity point for this battle.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
ALLIGATOR:	9	14

If you win, turn to **188**.

123

A supreme effort of determination and skill powers you up, and you gratefully get a good hold on the branch. It bends under your weight, but holds, and you clamber up onto the rough bark. From this vantage-point, you can see that the way East is, if anything, worse, and so you crawl along to the very end of the branch before dropping to the mossy ground.

You hurry back West to the crossroads. Will you now take the way:

South?	Turn to **65**
West?	Turn to **144**
Back North?	Turn to **184**

124

The Thin Man does not look wholly convinced by your story, but the mention of the Weaver makes him uncertain.

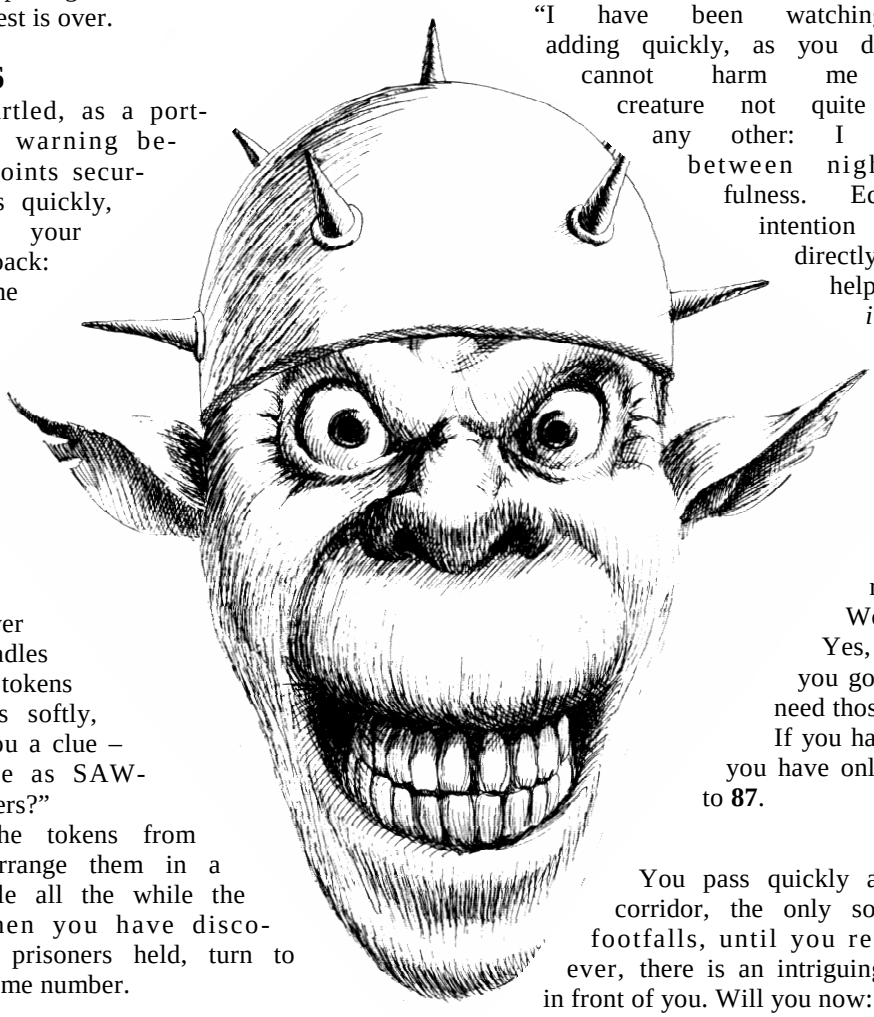
Reluctantly, he stands aside after a moment, lowering his rapier, and you edge past him to the door in the wall opposite – turn to **50**.

125

You dimly realise, as the numbing cold grips you ever tighter, that you are not going to make it. Your mind is wandering, you have lost almost all sensation now, as you crawl towards the opening, still so far distant in the East wall . . . your quest is over.

126

You leap forward, startled, as a portcullis drops without warning behind you, its deadly points securing it in the floor. As quickly, another drops before your face, and you jump back: you are nicely caged. The Weaver smiles. "You have come for the prisoners," he says. His eyes suddenly gleam unnaturally, as he softly asks, *"but how many are there?"* He leans forward intently in his chair, his eyes never leaving yours, as he cradles his cup of wine. "The tokens will tell you," he says softly, "and I will even give you a clue – I am also known here as SAWRAN. How many prisoners?"



You rapidly take the tokens from your backpack, and arrange them in a line on the floor, while all the while the Weaver watches. When you have discovered the number of prisoners held, turn to the section that has the same number.

127

You shortly arrive at another junction – there is a well-lit passage on your right. Will you now:

Take the new way North?	Turn to **186**
Continue West?	Turn to **60**

128

As you place the golden object gingerly into the first jar, the neck snaps closed over your wrist, gripping so tightly, it feels as though your bones will snap at any second. But abruptly, you are released, gasping with pain, the star still in your hand. Lose four Strength points. You replace the star in the dish and think again – turn to **29**.

129

This corridor slopes steadily downwards for some way, before levelling off, and you see that there is a passage to the East. Will you now:

Go East?	Turn to **201**
Continue North?	Turn to **64**

130

You move slowly around the room, raising small clouds of dust, and clearing the cobwebs with your sword. Although candles are burning, it looks as though the room has not been occupied for years. Old chairs, tables and wardrobes are piled in corners, broken and covered with the dust of years. There is nothing that you can see of value or interest. As you are about to leave, the candles briefly flicker and dim, and then flame into incandescent light, each a small torch. A familiar face appears, apparently passing through the West wall – Dreadthread; at his appearance, the open doors in the North, South and East walls close, and he smiles his mad smile at you.

"I have been watching you," he leers, adding quickly, as you draw your sword, "you cannot harm me – I am a creature not quite of this world or any other: I exist in the land between nightmares and wakefulness. Equally, I have no intention of harming you directly. I may be able to help you though – I can *influence* things, you see." Dreadthread's wild features flicker in the glow from the candles, as he continues, "there is now no way out of this room – unless *I* allow it. Would you like to get out? Yes, of course! Now, have you got the two keys? You will need those!"

If you have two keys, turn to **2**. If you have only one key, or none, turn to **87**.

131

You pass quickly along the wood-panelled corridor, the only sound that of your own footfalls, until you reach a dead-end. However, there is an intriguing lever set into the wall in front of you. Will you now:

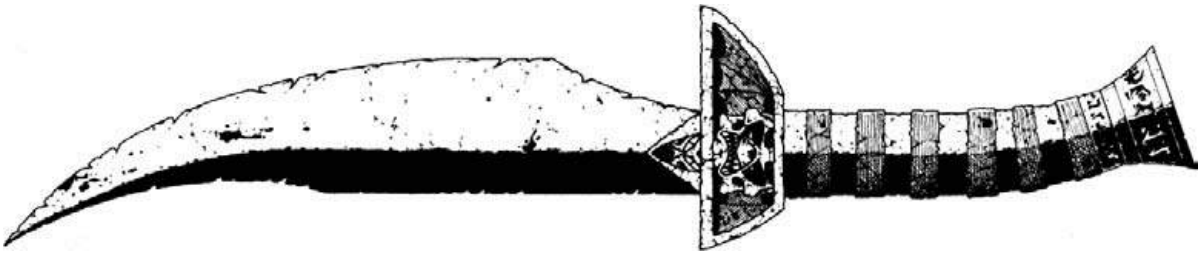
Pull the lever?	Turn to **199**
Return East to the last junction?	Turn to **215**

132

Drinking this will enable you to exercise the power of telekinesis – that is, you will be able to move an object by the power of your mind alone. Living beings are not affected by this power. Turn to **26**.

133

With the gift of the mysterious rope in your backpack, and whatever magic you have bought, you turn to leave. The door in the trunk swings slowly open again, and you are back in the wood. "Go back to the path you have left, and then West," you hear. "Do not believe in spirits that would harm you. And use my magic wisely." Turn to **88**.



134

The road East is dark but quiet, and you pass another rough path to your right before you reach a headland overlooking a small harbour. A ship rides at anchor at the end of the jetty, and you can see warehouses along the quayside. At this time of night all is quiet, save for the faint creaking of the ship as she moves gently in the light swell, and you make camp for the night – a simple shelter of leaves and small branches – and await the dawn.

The moment you lie down, your shoulders propped on your backpack and your sword at your side, you realise just how tired you are: and in less than a minute, your eyelids have closed, and you drift into a deep, peaceful sleep. Turn to **78**.

135

Which of the two remaining shapes will you place into the next jar:

The square?	Turn to **214**
The disc?	Turn to **19**

136

With a swift prayer, you down the potion of Var, as Grenschetch approaches. Immediately, it takes effect: your whole body shrinks, and you can feel your shape changing drastically. Your eyesight becomes much keener, and you see a large yellow beak growing, where once your nose was; you sprout feathers, and as Grenschetch swings her cleaver, soar into the air – you have become a large blackbird. Unfortunately, you have not yet learnt to fly very well, and as she dances below you, dribbling, cackling and swinging her meat-cleaver, you flap crazily around the room, bouncing off walls, swooping, climbing – until the magic abruptly wears off, and you drop like a stone, landing safely, but very unpleasantly, in a huge and very over-ripe cheese!

You stumble to your feet – apart from being rather smelly, you seem to have returned completely to normal, and face Grenschetch and her cleaver and cloak with your sword and shield.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
GRENSCHETCH:	9	12

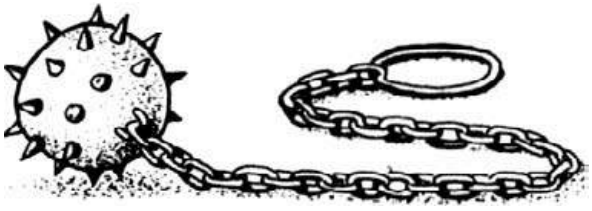
If you defeat her, turn to **116**.

137

The Wood Man, you quickly discover, is made of much tougher stuff than you had imagined. However, he is slow moving, and his actions are clumsy, and you confidently move to the attack.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
WOOD MAN:	6	14

If you win, turn to **194**.



138

Uncertainly, you try the door on your right – it flies open instantly, and your final memory is of a thick plank of wood, studded with dozens of long dagger-blades, springing up from the floor to impale you. Your quest is over.

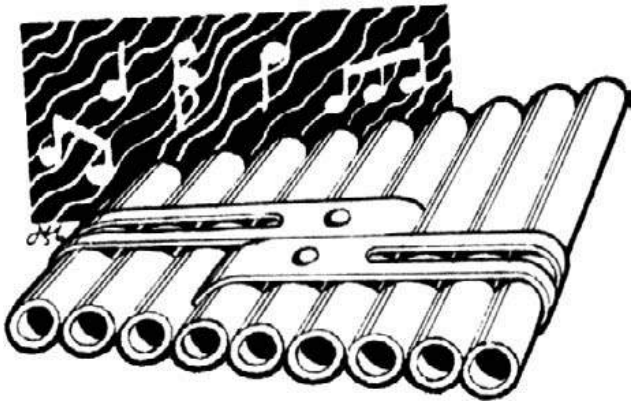
139

Your movements become weaker, as the spectral creature closes, two arms dragging gently at your hair while the third hand pokes inquisitively and painfully at your eyes. Pulled into the embrace of this undead monster, you realise that your quest is finished.

140

Taking the second potion of Tel from your backpack, you empty it in one gulp, and concentrate your gaze on the red casket. It floats easily away from the shelf, and down into your waiting arms. Holding the casket away from you this time, you warily lift the lid – but you are quite safe, it seems, and you look inside. A beautifully-made solid silver dagger lies on a cushion of velvet, and you at once take it out. It is obviously valuable in its own right, as well as being a useful-looking weapon, and you put it into your backpack.

The blue casket now remains, but the marvellous effects of Tel have worn off: if you are to investigate it, you will need a third potion. If you have a third, and wish to use it now, turn to **83**. If not, you will have to seek a way out of this featureless room – turn to **224**.



141

Confident in the power of this magic potion, you concentrate on the blue casket, and telepathically lift it from the shelf and down into your waiting arms. Excited, you lift the lid, wondering what treasures await – but all that is in the casket is a set of pan-pipes! Puzzled, you nevertheless place these safely in your backpack, and consider the remaining two caskets.

The power of the potion has already almost worn off, and you are able to shift them by mind-power only a fraction. If you have another potion of Tel, and wish to use it here, choose which casket you are going to lift down next: if the red casket, turn to **216**; if the yellow one, turn to **143**. If you have no more bottles of this magic potion, or if you do not wish to use them here, then you will have to leave – turn to **224**.

142

Shortly, the passage turns South, and you walk down a narrow, panelled corridor, lit at intervals by torches. You soon realise that something is moving in the shadows ahead of you, and drawing your sword, advance slowly.

It is not long before you see the source of the shuffling, growling sound – a large, spiny-coated creature the size of a bear is heading towards you up the corridor! Its mighty jaws open, drooling fresh blood as it snarls at you, making the hair on your neck tingle. You wonder, for a moment, whether this thing is real, or one of the Weaver's nightmare creations – and you wonder whether you dare risk finding out! The Mawgrind is close now, and you must decide quickly. If you believe the Mawgrind is real, turn to **114**. If you think it is simply illusory, and can be safely ignored, turn to **59**.

143

Drinking the second bottle of Tel, you again feel the potent magic flowing through your veins, and, concentrating on the yellow casket, you float it away from the shelf and down to you, and eagerly lift the lid – instantly there is a small explosion, and a cloud of burning, stinging dust is hurled up into your face. You stagger back, dropping the casket, as you fight for breath and your eyes stream with fiery tears. Lose three Strength points.

When at last you are able to see and breathe normally again, you look up at the red casket: the power of the potion has worn off, and if you are to risk investigating it, you will need another. If you have a third potion of Tel, and wish to use it here, turn to **152**. Otherwise, you will have to find a way out of this room – turn to **224**.

144

This is a good track, you soon discover, and follow it as it turns quite soon to the South. Broad and quiet, there are wild flowers and herbs bordering the path, and you begin to feel quite relaxed. And at once are tripped, falling badly; some creature has grasped your ankle. Cutting out wildly with your sword, it takes some time before you realise that nothing is attacking you, and you stoop to examine your injured leg. You have stepped into a snare, and quickly cut it away; the wound is unpleasant, but you should live – lose three Strength points.

Limping slightly now, you continue South with great care. There are numerous traps and snares set, you see, as you stealthily tread South. But soon the track swings to the East, and you follow it to a junction. Will you now go:

North? Turn to **94**
South? Turn to **160**

145

This track is easily wide enough for you to move at a good pace, and soon you follow it as it turns North. Striding briskly along in the moonlight, you notice that snares and traps for animals are set beside the path – and are brought suddenly crashing to the ground as a fine but strong snare abruptly tightens round your ankle.

Cursing, you lean forward to examine your leg, and carefully cut away the snare. It has bitten deep into your flesh, and there is a fair amount of blood – lose three Strength points.

You get to your feet and carry on North with a good deal more care; although your leg is painful, it should soon heal, but for the moment, you are limping slightly,

as the path turns to the East, soon reaching a crossroads. Will you now go:

North, back towards the village?	Turn to **184**
South?	Turn to **65**
East?	Turn to **33**

146

Anyone who drinks this potion will believe that left is right, and right is left. It can thus be very useful in confusing an enemy – but first, you will have to find a way of getting an opponent to drink it. Turn to **26**.

147

Passing through the door, which opens easily, you find yourself in a North-heading corridor; and you have moved only a few yards along it when you see that there is another off to your right. This is quite a short corridor, and you see that there is a door at the end of it. Which way will you go now:

East?	Turn to **175**
Continue North?	Turn to **66**

148

You walk along the corridor East, following it back round to the South, and into the room where Baulk lies dead. Swiftly, you cross the room to the other door and push it – turn to **147**.

149

As soon as you drink the potion of Var, you begin to see and feel its effects. You are unsure what form you are taking, but your arms become at once thick and scaly, and your breathing a muffled roar. The effects of this potion will last only as long as this battle, but for the moment, you have become a huge and powerful monster! Add five Strength points, and turn to **155**.

150

You steel yourself as the Thin Man's rapier-point touches your chest. His cold gaze bores into you as the point pierces your light leather tunic; the pain is real enough, and so is the blood that you can now feel flowing! With a cry of pain you jump back, your own sword at the ready. You are fortunate: another couple of seconds and the Thin Man would have run you through. As it is, you are only slightly injured – lose two Strength points, as you prepare to fight for real. Turn to 197.

151

Fairly soon, you have reached a dead-end. Annoyed, you search the wood-panelled wall you are facing carefully, searching for hidden buttons or false panels, but to no avail. You may be able to cut your way through it with your sword; however, you have no idea how solid the wall is, or what if anything lies behind it. If you wish to try hacking your way through, turn to **15**. The only alternative is to go back North – turn to **203**.

152

Again, you drink the potion, and feel the telepathic power. Your eyes firmly fixed on the red casket, you lift it away from the shelf, and gently down into your arms. Holding it warily at arms' length, you lift the lid; nothing happens, and so you look inside: a dagger, finely-worked and of purest silver lies on a velvet cushion. Pleased, you take out this treasure and put it in your backpack. Since there is now apparently nothing else to investigate in this bare room, you turn to leave – turn to **224**.

153

Taking the potion of Trip from your backpack, you grab the little Hobgoblin by the scruff of the neck and pour the potion down his throat. He chokes a little on it, but then his eyes cross, and, as you release him, he attempts to take a step back and promptly falls over! The potion has worked. You again ask him which door is safe; it takes a few seconds for him to answer, as he is totally confused by what has happened to him, but a gentle prod from your sword soon has him talking again: "The door on your left," he gurgles, "the door on your left is safe." Will you now try the door on your:

Left?	Turn to **207**
Right?	Turn to **138**

154

Walking steadily down this corridor, you see, after a few minutes, that there is a dead-end not far ahead. However, just before you reach the end, you notice two doors set into the walls opposite each other. They both look the same, and both have handles. You stop; will you try the door on your:

Left?	Turn to **158**
Right?	Turn to **11**

155

The Mawgrind is powerful, and its hard spines give it some protection against your blade: deduct only one Strength point for each successful blow. Each successful attack by the Mawgrind in the battle will cause the usual two Strength points of damage to you. You fight.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
MAWGRIND:	9	14

If you win, turn to **168**.

156

Struggling, you hit out repeatedly at the dead-eyed thing that threatens you, but to no avail – still its hands claw at you, and its rotting face presses ever closer – turn to **25**

157

There appear to be only three caskets on the shelf, as you crane your neck: one red, one yellow and one blue, and there is nothing else, as far as you can see, on the shelf. Drinking your potion of Tel, you feel a wave of exhilarating power: you look up again, knowing you could lift down any of these caskets with your eyes, as easily as with your hands. Which will you bring down first:

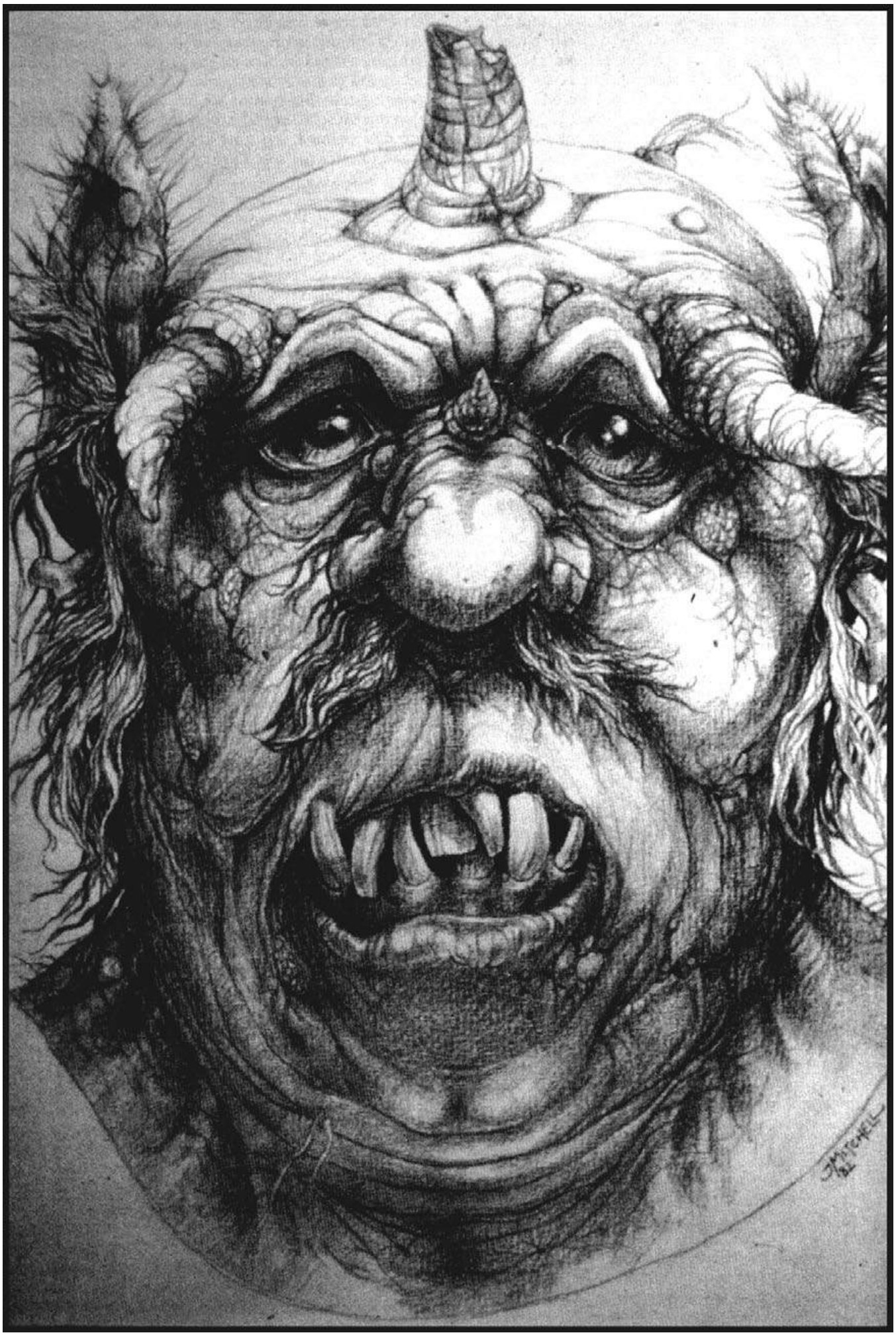
The red casket?	Turn to **40**
The blue?	Turn to **141**
The yellow?	Turn to **73**

158

Pushing open the door, you enter a small and dirty room; a few sticks of battered furniture are scattered about, and seated on a rickety chair is a man whose appearance stops you in your tracks. His age is impossible to even guess at, as his features are grossly distorted. Small, warty horns sprout from above his eyes, and from his bald head, and a wispy moustache grows from his nostrils. He opens his mouth, revealing a set of crowded, broken teeth, jutting at all angles. "Welcome, Stranger," he manages to say, in mournful tones. "You are my first visitor for many years."

You take a pace or two forward. This creature appears to be harmless, and you ask why he is there.

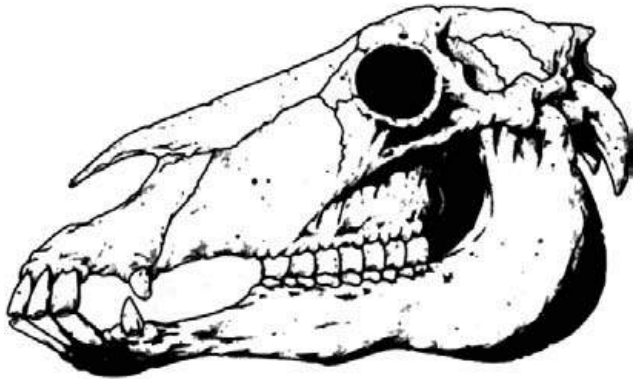
"The Weaver took a dislike to me," he says, his voice



emerging with obvious difficulty, "and I am imprisoned here, until – maybe – he one day decides to free me; and perhaps to return to me my original features." His wide, sad eyes gaze into yours: "I am Glop," he says. "I do not know your name, or what you have done, but you are imprisoned also. There is no escape now."

You turn in sudden alarm – the door behind you has closed silently. "If you are quick," Glop adds, "you will probably be able to leave the way you came in. But it will not help you."

You reconsider for a moment – perhaps this whole scene is illusion. If you believe in Glop and his strange story, turn to **222**. If you decide that this is another trick, and can be safely ignored, turn to **81**.



159

You walk East for a short time, and then the corridor turns North, and you continue down it a fair way, your senses alert to every sound. But your passage is uneventful, and soon you have to turn back to the West. A short distance ahead, you can see an open doorway, and you pass through it into a small cobwebbed, candle-lit room. Turn to **130**.

160

The undergrowth is thicker here, the trees closer, as though threatening to swallow you up; but you shortly get to a junction, and see that the way is better both to left and right. So will you now take the path:

East?	Turn to **79**
West?	Turn to **101**

161

Despite all your efforts, you cannot quite reach the branch. Tantalisingly close, your fingers slip from it, and with each renewed effort, you fall back further. The gluey quagmire steadily swallows you as you struggle. Soon it is up to your chest . . . your neck. As it reaches your mouth, you take a last look up at the clear night sky, and the bright moon – your quest is over.

162

It is not long before the path turns to the East again, and you follow it through the encroaching trees for some way, until it swings North. You can hear the sound of running water ahead, and soon find yourself on the bank of a small stream.

Although the moonlight makes the water dark and a little threatening, the stream appears to be shallow, and the far bank is barely ten yards away. Nevertheless, you are cautious as you walk across, your sword testing the depth ahead of you – but at its deepest, the stream reaches only just above your knees, and you are soon safely across. A few minutes more, and you are out of the wood, and crossing a meadow. Ahead, you think you can make out a road, and as you reach it, take your bearings. West, the poor lights of Glengantha are just visible, and you realise that this must be the main route out of the township. You are disappointed, but time is pressing, and so you turn right, towards the sea. Turn to **134**.

163

The cause of the noise is soon apparent, as a large creature bounds towards you down the narrow corridor. Its steady, threatening growl increases as it approaches, and it opens its cavernous jaws, giving a ferocious roar as you raise your sword and shield. Although daunting, the "huge creature seems somehow out of place here, and it crosses your mind that this might just be one of the Weaver's nasty tricks. If you believe it is real, turn to **182**. If you think that it is just an illusion, and can be safely ignored, turn to **96**.

164

Taking it from the dish, you lift it with great care towards the jar. It is becoming warmer, you think, and in moments it is red-hot, burning your hand! You drop it at once, but your palm has a painful, square-shaped burn. Lose three Strength points. You put it back in the dish, and sigh. You will have to try again. Turn to **118**.

165

You go below, steadying yourself against the ship's motion by holding onto a bulkhead, until you begin to become used to the rhythmic swaying and dipping. You go over to a porthole and gaze out at the empty sea; small plumes of spray glitter in the early sunlight, and the fresh sea air is invigorating. The crew are more relaxed now the ship is under way, and the task ahead of you feels much less daunting.

You stroll over to a sailor, sitting under a rough wooden bunk and eating his breakfast of hardtack and grog, and ask him how long the journey will take. "We'll be there before noon," he says, chewing steadily and looking you straight in the eye. "But we'll hold off and lower you in a boat in sight of land. Then it'll be weigh anchor and away South, smartish. Captain's orders."

Back on deck, you stand with one leg on the rail, watching the skyline to the East, and it is not long before you can make out, dimly, the coastline. Amid shouts and commotion, the ship takes in sail and gradually heaves-to, dropping anchor a few hundred yards off shore. One of the sailors has unlashed a boat, and is obviously waiting for you, so you climb in, and at once it is lowered into the water. Dipping the oars, you begin to pull, and have gone only a few yards before the ship begins to turn. Another minute or two, and she has weighed anchor and is sailing away.

Alone now, you pull steadily East towards the shore. Turn to **23**.

166

At the junction again, you can either return East – turn to **148**; or go West – turn to **131**.

167

He seems unsure at first, but then he lowers his rapier and approaches. "Very well," he says, "I will try this magic." Pleased that Lie has worked so well for you, you quickly get the bottle of Trip from your backpack, and, removing the stopper, offer it to him. Guardedly, watching you all the while, he drinks it. In a moment, it is quite obviously working, as he staggers comically about, falling over, walking into the wall, and stabbing furiously with his rapier at thin air, as you easily sidestep, knock the blade from his hand with your own, and grinning, walk past to the door in the wall opposite – turn to **50**.

168

No other creature blocks your way as you carry on down the narrow corridor, following it round to the East until you reach a junction. Will you now go:

North?	Turn to **186**
Or continue East?	Turn to **74**

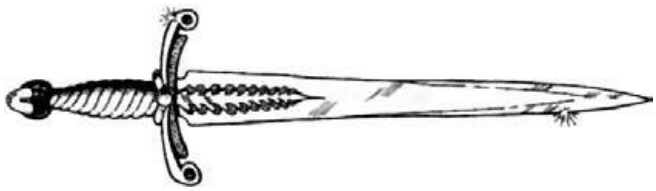
169

The corridor North ends after a short time at a plain wooden door; it opens when you cautiously prod it with your sword, and you pass into the room beyond, alert for danger. Turn to **67**.

170

A potion of Kil would be of assistance here, or possibly Var; Lie and Trip may well work as well – although the Thin Man has still not spoken, you have the feeling that you may well be able to trick him into drinking the potion of Trip, once you have taken Lie yourself. If you wish to try:

Var	Turn to **209**
Kil	Turn to **39**
Lie	Turn to **8**



171

You go some way East, until the corridor turns to the North, and the floor begins a steady slope upwards. There are no torches set into the walls here, and soon you are groping your way along in total darkness. However, there is a dull glow not far distant, and you make your way towards it. As you approach, you see that it is an open doorway, and pass through – to fall headlong down a sheer drop, landing in something that is soft enough to break your fall, but which gives off a great fog of dust.

In a minute or two, you have collected your senses, and get to your feet. You have landed in a pile of old sacking, in a small, square, poorly-lit room. You are unhurt, and look around, sneezing as the dust gets into your nose. Turn to **72**.

172

The ground is firm, and the bright moon allows you to see clearly. However, the track soon turns to the North, and you follow it until you arrive at a crossroads. North, the path must lead back to Glengantha. If you wish to return to the township, turn to **184**. Alternatively, you could try the way West – turn to **144**; or East – turn to **33**.

173

The full moon allows you to make your way easily South through the wood, and you pause for a moment when you arrive at a junction. A new way leads off to your right. You could continue on your way, or try this new path. Will you now go:

West?	Turn to **145**
Or continue South?	Turn to **160**

174

If you drink this potion, your form will alter: however, there is no telling what you may change into. Its effect wears off quite quickly. Turn to **26**.

175

You walk softly East to the door, and stop to listen. There is no sound from beyond, and when you cautiously try the door, it opens, and you step into a small room; the floorboards and walls are bare, and the only thing in the room is a sturdy, marble-topped table, with four jars set into its surface, in a line. Moving forward, you see that there is also a small, shallow dish on the table, containing four metal objects. As you pick them up to look at them, the door slams violently shut behind you. There is no keyhole or handle, and when you strike it a hefty blow with your sword – more out of curiosity than expectation – the door is quite unmarked. You are securely locked in.

You turn back to examine the metal objects again, hoping with some anxiety that someone will come to release you soon. The pieces of metal appear to be a disc made of bronze, an iron square, a silver triangle, and a gold star. At once, you are reminded of the scroll you found, and remove it from your backpack. Smoothing it out on the marble-topped table, you read it carefully. It says:

"Of each pair of statements here, one is true, the other false –

1. Place the square first.
   Place Gold next to Bronze, and also next to Silver.
2. Place Silver first.
   Place the triangle second.
3. Place Iron between the disc and Silver.
   Place the square last."

Evidently, you need to place the metal shapes into the four jars set into the table-top, though you have no idea what will happen when you have done so. Turn to **29**.

176

Still apparently quite calm and relaxed in his deep, ornate chair, this strange character surveys you from beneath lowered lids, seeming to be scarcely breathing. Warily,

you sit, and ask him how he came to be called Chunk.

For answer, he brings his hand down onto the solid mahogany table, rigid as a sword-blade. As the table splits in two, and splinters fly into the air, he smiles, and says "That's why."

You jump to your feet, sword drawn, as he springs over the wreckage, fist and foot extended, and dodge his first assault. There is no time for magic here, and you fight at once.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
CHUNK:	10	10

If you win, turn to **95**.

177

This passage heads upwards for some little way, and narrows; and at the end of it, you are faced with a solid wooden wall. Irritated, you consider hacking at it with your sword: if you wish to try this, turn to 3. Otherwise, you will have to go back down to the crossroads. From there, you could then go North – turn to **190**; or East – turn to **159**.

178

As you approach a crossroads ahead of you, and are considering which way to go next, your feet are suddenly whisked from under you. Stumbling uncertainly to your feet, you realise what is happening – the whole floor is moving, and carrying you with it, carrying you inexorably Northwards. Turn to **221**.

179

Numb with cold, and your mind becoming hazy, you stagger out of the doorway and into a passage, where, you are greatly pleased to discover, the temperature is normal again. You stop to rub some life back into your frozen limbs, and exercise on the spot until you feel ready to go on. This passage East very soon reaches a junction – a corridor stretches to your left and to your right. Will you go:

North?	Turn to **178**
South?	Turn to **154**

180

You confidently tell the Frog King his age, and his bulbous eyes stare at you for several seconds, while you grit your teeth and stare defiantly back at him. At last, he blinks, and the crushing grip of the crystal belt lessens. Within seconds, its brightness fades, and you can move and breathe again. You hear the guards behind you moving restlessly, as though awaiting further orders; the Frog King still glares at you, then at last curtly motions with his wand. It takes a second or two before you realise that he means you to move past him, and you do so gingerly, giving him a wide berth, until you see that there is an open doorway in the wall behind him. Swiftly you are through it, and running down a short corridor North.

You emerge in a fairly large room, and stop to look around. Behind you, the wall is lined with books, piled to the ceiling – which is, you estimate, about forty feet high. The East and West walls are similarly book-lined, but directly opposite you, two staircases curve up, ending at solid-looking doors. You realise that the ceiling slopes, and is higher on the North side of the library.

As you are taking all this in, the candles that light the room begin to flicker, and, one by one, go out, until only two remain. You move unsteadily forwards into the gloom, then stop dead in your tracks, as a spectral warrior, clad in plate-mail and wielding a broadsword,

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appears from the left-hand wall. Floating a foot or so above the ground, his mournful face observes you, as he is joined by others; your hand is on your sword-hilt, but you know that you cannot protect yourself against these spirits by force of arms. And, in moments, the library is half-filled with Wraiths, the spirits of soldiers and civilians, some of whom evidently died in battle as they bear the awful evidence: some have limbs missing, some are maimed, and one has been beheaded. They begin chanting, a low, tuneless, stomach-turning chorus of moans; you try to run, but cannot move. The Wraiths circle you, and you can make out words now in their graveyard chorus: "The music," they are calling, "play the music on the pipes, that we may rest."

If you have a set of pan-pipes, turn to **204**. If not, turn to **21**.

181

You remember this brass-bound door, and recall the way that it swallowed the red key you won from Dreadthread. You turn back South, and see again the passage on your left. Will you now:

Take the way East? Turn to **171**
Continue South? Turn to **38**

182

This powerful creature – a Mawgrind – has a tough spiny coat, and its gaping mouth drips with fresh blood as you nervously approach. If you wish to fight with sword and shield, turn to **16**. If you would rather try magic, and you have some of Frowellyn's potions, turn to **9**.

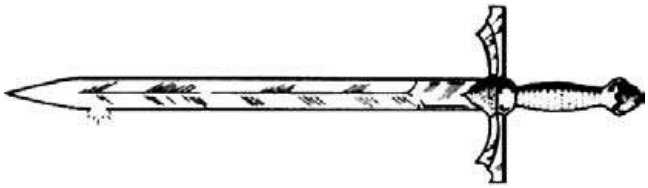
183

Swiftly, you take the potion from your backpack and drink it: you immediately feel a change coming over you – but not one you welcome! Your arms become as thin as sticks, and your belly swells, making movement difficult. A feeling of lethargy wells over you, as you sway towards battle with the Mawgrind. Worse, the Mawgrind's tough, spiny coat affords it protection against your sword, so deduct just one Strength point from the creature for each blow you score in this fight.

The effects of the potion, if you survive, will soon wear off, but for this battle, deduct two Dexterity points from your current score, and one Strength point.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
MAWGRIND:	9	14

If you survive this unequal contest, turn to **113**.



184

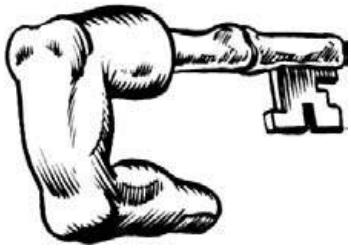
There is nothing to fear, though your skin is tingling. The path North is straight and true, though the overhanging branches and leaves snag at you, and the trees crowd in on either side. But then you are clear of the woods, and crossing the badly-tilled field again. Shortly, you find that the alleyway between the shacks on the outskirts of Glengantha is depressingly familiar. You walk North until you reach the main street once more. There are fewer people about now, though still two small fires burn, over which people huddle, toasting rotted corn-cobs.

You could now walk through the village, to the coast – turn to **4**. Or return South, to the woods – turn to **20**.

185

It is not long before you see that there is a way to the North. Will you:

Go North? Turn to **109**
Carry on West? Turn to **111**



186

There is a closed door just visible in the distance ahead, and you move quickly towards it. Reaching it, you see that it is solid-looking, and does not give at all when you try pushing at it. However, there is a small keyhole, shaped just like a finger. If you have a key fashioned from a human finger, turn to **107**. If not, turn to **24**.

187

Although you are not aware of any obvious changes, you experience a sense of charged energy and vitality as soon as you have drained the potion. Add three Dexterity points and four Strength points for the duration of this battle, and turn to **16**.

188

Gratefully, you splash out of the water, and rest for a moment on the North bank. When you have got your breath back, you push on again, and are soon out of the wood. The path continues, across a field, until it meets a main road. Looking West, you can just make out Glengantha, and realise that this must be the continuation of the main street out of town. Time is pressing now, if you are to leave at dawn, and so you hurry East until you reach a headland overlooking a sheltered bay.

The quayside is silent at this time of night, the only sound the creaking of a ship's timbers, as it rides gently at anchor off the jetty. Soon you have made a simple bed from leaves and bracken, and curl up to await the dawn. But in minutes you are fast asleep. Turn to **78**.

189

The door opens at your touch, and you follow the corridor beyond it North, and then West, as it turns sharply. Not much further, you see that there is a way to your right. Will you:

Continue West?	Turn to **131**
Go North?	Turn to **106**

190

The corridor is quite straight, and you continue down it unchallenged. In the distance, at its end, you can see an open doorway, and soon you are passing through it into a small, cobwebbed, candle-lit room. Turn to **130**.

191

"I think you might experience some difficulty," says the Weaver with a nasty smile. Turn to **126**.

192

Out of this room again, and back in the corridor, you give the door opposite a tentative push – but it is stuck fast. You head back North, past the way West, which led to the freezing room, and on North. Abruptly, you find that your balance has been affected in some way – you cannot seem to keep your feet. As you tumble to the ground, you realise why – the whole floor is moving, carrying you North. You come to a crossroads, but are sped North before you can do anything about it. Turn to **221**.

193

Although this was an expensive potion, it was a worthwhile purchase, you think, as the blood sings in your veins, and you feel as though you have muscles of steel. Add three Dexterity points and four Strength points for the duration of this battle.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
GRENSCHETCH:	9	12

If you win, turn to **116**.

194

The fight over, you sheathe your sword and take stock. You have come a long way, and survived a number of perils; your quest is far from over, but you feel you have a right to be reasonably pleased with your performance so far. Turn to **80**.

195

One swift blow, and the Hobgoblin is dead. You stand for a moment feeling angry with yourself for your reflex action – although untrustworthy, the Hobgoblin hardly deserved to die, and could have been some help to you. However, it is done now, and you guiltily put away your sword and look again at the two doors in the South wall. There is no obvious difference between them: both are of plain wood with a brass handle. Will you try the door on your left? If so, turn to **207**. Or the door on your right? Turn to **138**. Or will you decide to leave them both alone, and return North? Turn to **219**.

196

You can feel that the effects of the first potion have already worn off, and so you down the contents of the second bottle, and again experience the wonderful sensation of being able to control objects by the power of your mind alone. The blue casket floats away and down into your hands, and you lift the lid – inside is a set of pan-pipes!

Having no idea of their purpose, you nevertheless put them safely in your backpack. There is only the yellow casket left now. If you have a third potion of Tel – for this one is already wearing off – you may choose to use it to bring down and investigate the casket – turn to **43**. Otherwise, you will have to find a way out of the room now – turn to **224**.

197

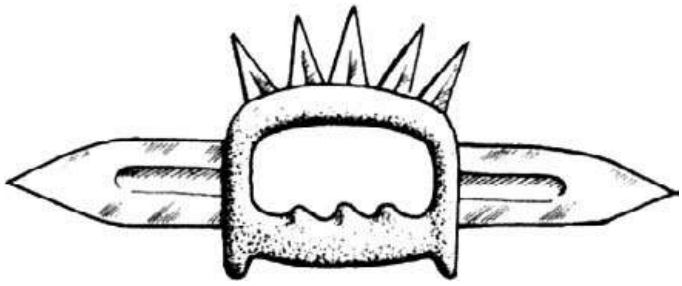
Warily you circle each other, cutting and parrying in this fight to the death.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
THIN MAN:	11	8

If you defeat this expert swordsman, turn to 50.

198

You are stranded. You do not relish the thought of a second encounter with the Frog King and his guards, and there is no other exit. Even as you feel panic mounting, the candles begin again to flicker and die, and darkness closes about you – your quest is over.



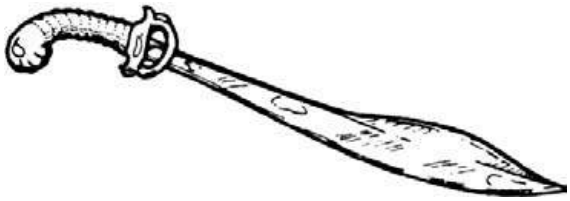
199

The moment you touch it, you are catapulted forwards, the wall swinging down before you, and the floor hurling you up and outwards, replacing the wall. You are thrown fully twenty yards, and land heavily and awkwardly in the midst of a patch of very large and sinister plants.

Waving gently, their long, tough stems moving like snakes' bodies, each plant has a wide, flat head, opening and closing jaw-like. One grasps your foot, and you feel a sharp stabbing pain. Others weave slowly down towards you, like small animals sniffing. An arm, and then your neck is caught. The pain begins to flood your body, as you feebly swing your sword, realising that you are in a bed of carnivorous plants! More of the bright-red pods swing gently towards you, blocking out the daylight, and your senses . . . your quest is over.

200

You take a cautious bite – it tastes fine! You eat the rest of it, and lean forward to take another: but as you do so, your stomach is gripped by excruciating cramp. Clutching your middle, you sink to your knees, contorted by pain, and cursing your own stupidity. For several minutes, you are unable to raise yourself, until at last the searing pain begins to lessen, and you get shakily to your feet to continue on your way – lose four Strength points, and turn to **121**.



201

The passage is poorly lit, and you grope your way down it until quite soon, you reach the end, stumbling against a door which swings obediently open. You are in a very small room indeed, not much bigger than a cupboard, and quite empty. As you are about to leave again, however, the door abruptly slams shut, and you have a strange, stomach-turning sensation of dropping like a stone, though nothing has changed. Equally suddenly, you are thrown to the floor by an invisible force, and the door swings open, very slowly. Getting up, you venture warily out. You cannot understand quite what has happened, but you look out now onto a quite different scene from the one before you entered the room.

A trench a yard or so wide runs past the doorway, carrying foul-looking water, and a nauseating stench drives you back into the little room. Holding your breath, you look out again, and realise where you are, though not how you came to be here – you are in the sewers beneath the Weaver's house! Trapped like a rat, you curse the Weaver and his creations loudly, though the only reply is the steady gurgling of the sewer-water running by. Perhaps you will be able to find your way out eventually, if you can face travelling these stinking, unlit tunnels – perhaps. For now, your quest is over.

202

Lifting the disc from the dish, you hesitantly move towards the jar. But waves of weakness bring you to your knees as you try to put it in place. The disc is becoming too heavy to even lift, and you drop it, clattering and rolling, onto the table. Lose two Strength points.

Getting wearily to your feet again, you put the disc back into the dish, and look at the metal shapes again. Turn to **118**.

203

Back at the junction, will you now go:

East?	Turn to **110**
West?	Turn to **142**

204

You take out the pan-pipes, and put them to your dry lips. Although you have never played them before, to your surprise a soft, melodic tune begins. You continue playing, and slowly the room lightens again, and the Wraiths' doleful chanting dies away, as they fade and are gone.

Relieved, you lower the pan-pipes and look about you again. You now see that, as well as the two staircases ahead of you, there is an open hatchway in the ceiling, on the East side. You have no way of reaching this hatch, although the rope that Frowellyn gave you, if you still have it, might be of assistance here. Will you try:

The left-hand staircase?	Turn to **218**
The right-hand staircase?	Turn to **76**
The hatchway (if you have the rope)?	Turn to **69**

205

"There should be no problem, then," smirks the Weaver. Turn to **126**.

206

You head steadily East through the woods, the shafts of bright moonlight casting threatening shadows with every step. Twigs snap under your feet as you pass, careful as you are, and you halt frequently, looking uneasily into the darkened undergrowth.

But so intent are you on watching the ground, and the bushes to either side, that it is only at the last moment that you hear a steady drumming swiftly increasing in volume, and you feel a powerful downdraught of air.

Looking up, sword at once at the ready, you see a huge winged creature swooping out of the full moon; and in echelon behind are a number of others. You have the impression of a powerful body, and strong, broad wings – but the face is that of a snarling jungle predator, and its tail ends in a vicious barb. You do battle with the Spearwing, but because it attacks with both fangs and tail simultaneously, throw the dice twice for the Spearwing to determine its Fighting Power, and once for yourself, in each round of the battle. Each successful blow from the Spearwing will cause you two Strength points of damage. The battle begins:

	Dexterity	*Strength*
SPEARWING:	8	10

If you survive, turn to **92**.

207

You pull open the door on your left. At the centre of a small, brightly-lit room is a low pedestal, and placed on the top is a rectangular piece of metal – another token! You suspect a trap, but in order to get this token, you will have to enter the room; as fast as you can, you dash in, grab the token and are out again, unharmed. Relieved, you look at it: the letters 'PU' are inscribed. You put it carefully away at once, and return North. Turn to **219**.

208

A few paces down the passage South, and you are outside the door. You stop to listen, but there is no sound from beyond; but you have your sword at the ready as you grasp the door-handle and pull: the room beyond is well-lit, and completely empty. Puzzled, you walk in – and at once the door slams shut and the glow from the torches fades to nothing. Fighting panic, you stumble back to where the door was, but there is no handle on this side. You jump and whirl round as something touches the back of your neck – and freeze in horror: a disembodied, faintly-glowing hand, still dripping blood, is tugging at you!

Even as you watch, more of the ghastly stumps float towards you out of the darkness, tugging at your hair, your arms, your shield. Paralysed you stand there, your heart beating wildly and your mouth open in a silent scream, until your vision clouds, and you lose consciousness. Turn to **71**.

209

The instant you have drunk the potion, you have the distinct feeling that it was a mistake. You can feel yourself shrinking, your features becoming crumpled and twisted – you are turning into a gnome! The Thin Man's face slowly twists into a grin as he advances again.

Fortunately, the effects of the potion will very soon wear off; however, you must deduct three Dexterity points and four Strength points for this battle. Turn to **197**.

210

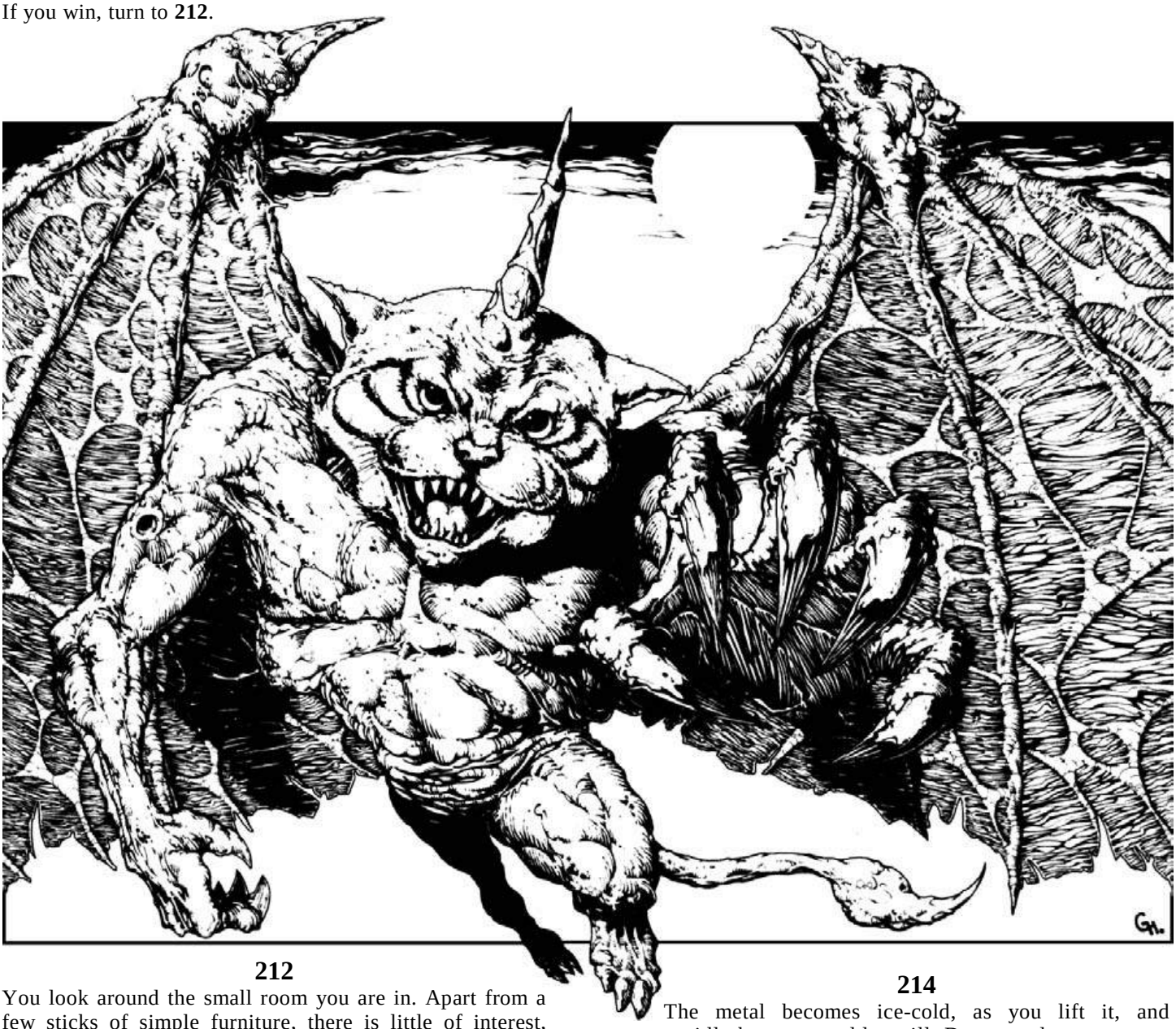
The only magic potions that might be of immediate help here are Var, or Kil; if you have Var, turn to **149**. If you have Kil, turn to **13**.

211

Hoping you are right, you leap at once to the attack. Baulk, although huge, is slow, and you get in the first sword-cut. He looks even more angry now – although you have drawn blood, he does not seem greatly affected by it; this will not be an easy battle.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
BAULK:	8	14

If you win, turn to **212**.



212

You look around the small room you are in. Apart from a few sticks of simple furniture, there is little of interest, though you quickly rummage through a small chest to one side. There are tunics, of varied designs and sizes, and a few weapons, though none so fine as your own sword. However, there is one item which might perhaps be of use, a scroll, tied with ribbon. Unrolling it, you quickly read through it, but it makes no sense to you at the moment; it seems to be a set of instructions for sorting gold and silver, and squares and triangles. You keep it nevertheless, feeling that you may discover its meaning later.

You look at the two doors in the North wall, one on the left as you face it, and one on the right. Which door will you try first:

The right-hand door?	Turn to **147**
The left-hand door?	Turn to **189**

213

As you get closer, you see that it is a crossroads ahead of you, and walk towards it, trying to decide which way to go next. But even as you do so, your feet are abruptly whipped away from under you – the whole floor is moving, and carrying you with it! At the crossroads, as you stumble to your feet again, you are whisked Northwards. There is an archway ahead: turn to **221**.

214

The metal becomes ice-cold, as you lift it, and rapidly becomes colder still. Desperately, you try to drop it, but it has become welded to your palm; the pain is intense, as a freezing mist drifts up from your hand, and you have to tear away the square, taking your skin with it. The freezing square rattles on the table-top as you examine your damaged hand. Lose four Strength points, and turn to **135**.

215

Back at the junction, will you now:

Take the corridor North?	Turn to **106**
Continue East?	Turn to **148**

216

You take the small bottle from your backpack and drink its flavourless contents. Again you feel a surge of excitement, and, concentrating on the red casket, lift it telepathically down, and lift the lid. Inside, a finely-wrought silver dagger lies on a bed of velvet; it is obviously valuable, and may also be useful to you in your quest, and you put it in your backpack. The yellow casket now remains, but this potion is already wearing off. If you are to investigate the last casket, you will need another. If you have more Tel, and wish to use it now, turn to **43**. Otherwise, you will have to leave – turn to **224**.

217

The door is not locked, and you look into an extremely small, and rather cold room. There is more food in here, as well as numerous pots, jars and bottles. Obviously, you think, some kind of larder. Will you:

Investigate further?	Turn to **22**
Leave, and go out through the East door?	Turn to **98**

218

You walk up the wide, curving staircase to the door at the top. Passing without trouble through this, you see that the small room you are now in is empty apart from a polished, oval table, on which are a number of packages. You count five altogether, each tied with a thin silver cord.

With great care, you attempt to untie one, but the silver cord, though thin, is extremely strong, and tied with an unfamiliar knot that you cannot seem to undo. Drawing your sword, you apply it to the thread: but far from slicing through it, the silver thread actually takes the edge slightly off your fine blade! Lose one Dexterity point. There is one other possibility – if you have found a silver dagger, turn to 18. If not, you have no choice but to leave, and go back down into the library. At the foot of the stairs again, you may then try the right-hand staircase – turn to **76**; or the hatchway, if you have Frowellyn's rope – turn to **69**.

219

You go back North, ignoring the junction on your right down which you came earlier, and continuing until you reach a doorway. The door is shut, but opens when you push it, and you go through into the room beyond. Turn to **67**.

220

You leap to your feet, drenched in cold sweat. Slowly, the nerve-shredding scene fades. You are on the headland, alone, and below you the ship sits quietly moored, the quay deserted. You slump to the ground, breathing fitfully, sword clenched firmly in both hands. The wind has begun to get up, and you welcome its cool touch.

But carried on the wind, you hear, faintly, cynical laughter and a disdainful voice: "The Weaver's creatures are everywhere in the night. You cannot harm his creations – but nor can they harm you, unless you believe in them!

"But within his house, they live and breathe, both by day and by night, and are waiting for you. Fight, and you may survive – or die. But not all is as it appears: nightmares fade harmlessly as morning mist; though axes and swords cut deep!"

The sneering voice fades, carried off Eastwards on the freshening breeze. Shivering now, you settle down as best you can for what remains of the night, watchful, alert, and more than a little scared. Turn to **93**.

221

You stumble forward into a room devoid of any furnishings or decoration. Facing you, seated in a finely-carved and padded chair, is a small man. His long fingers are steepled as he regards you thoughtfully, and his heavy moustache twitches. "Well, well," he remarks, in a deep, untroubled voice, "you got here at last. Did you enjoy the company of my . . . companions . . . on your way?" He gives a short laugh, and, without waiting for a reply, continues: "anyway, here you are. Now, what do you want?" As you are about to reply, he suddenly adds, "I assume you came to see me? The Weaver of Nightmares?"

Your anger at this smug, unpleasant character wells up inside you, but you swallow, take a deep breath, and merely say that you have come to take back the prisoners; and then you point out Dreadthread's promise of safe conduct and resettlement rights for the villagers. The Weaver lifts a chalice of wine from the floor and drinks, still watching you over the rim. Then he appears to come to a decision. "I see," he says, lowering the chalice, and casually tosses a piece of metal at your feet. Picking it up, you see that it is another token, inscribed with the single letter, 'E'. "Well then," he remarks, "you now have all seven of my tokens?" If you have seven tokens, turn to **205**. If not, turn to **191**.

222

Glop does not move, his expression remains mournful. You ask him what your best course of action is now, and, painfully slowly, he gets to his feet and moves to the door in the West wall, his bones creaking with every small step. He grasps the handle, and pulls the door open. "Ah," he sighs, "you may leave this way, it seems. However," he advises, sadly, "you must have learnt by now not to believe everything you see and hear in this place. In the room opposite, you will find, I believe, what you seek. But you will be lied to at least once, though not more than twice. I wish you well," he finally adds, mournfully.

You leave Glop's cell, awash with emotions, unsure whether you are angry, sad, pleased or frustrated. As you try the door opposite, Glop's slams shut. Turn to **11**.

223

You are in a narrow, torch-lit corridor, which, you see, turns to the North not far distant. You follow it round to the North, walking some way before it turns back to the West. A short distance West, and you see a narrow opening on your left, leading to a plain, closed door with a wooden handle. Will you:

Explore this way South?	Turn to **208**
Ignore it, and carry on West?	Turn to **185**

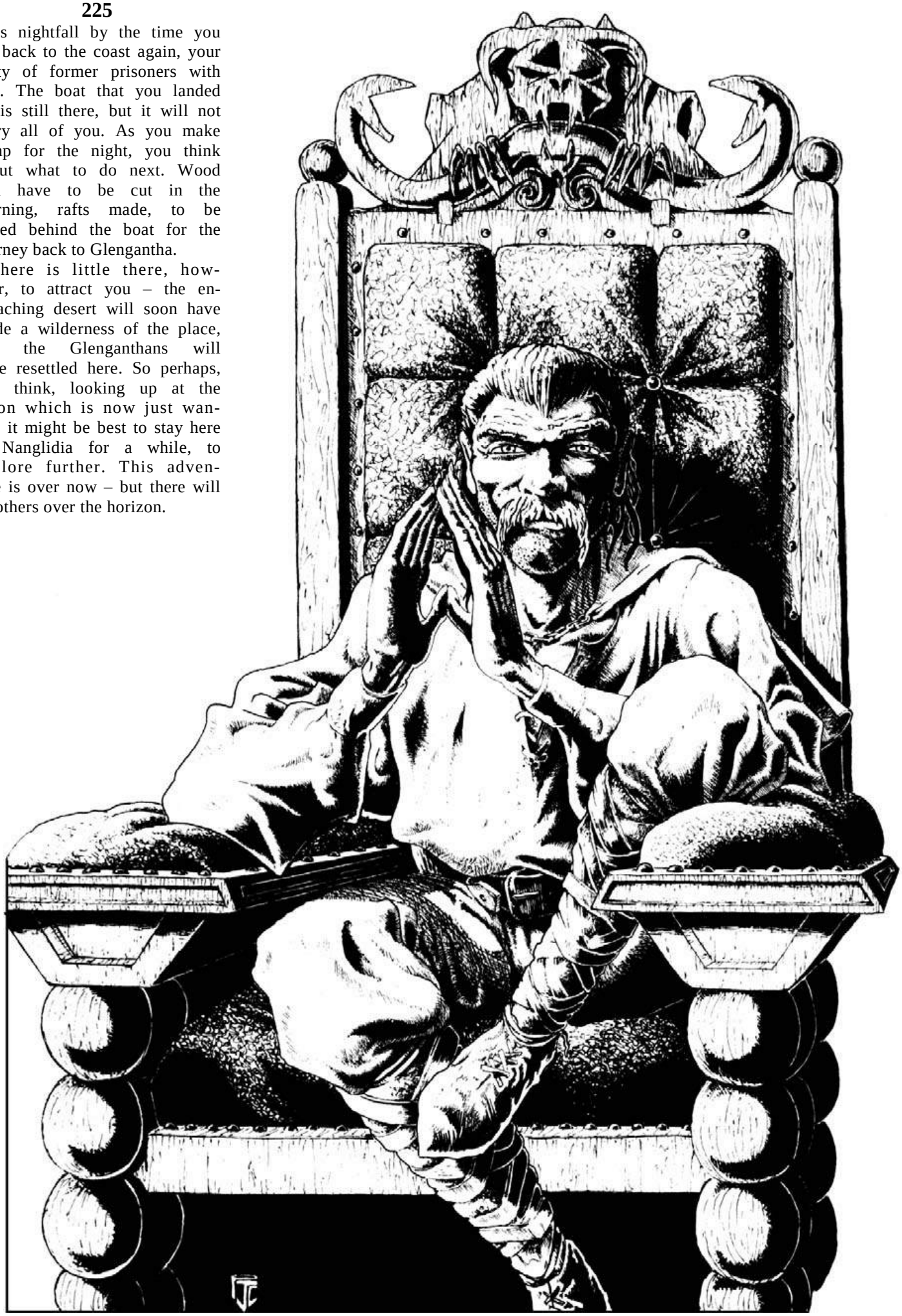
224

There are no doors in any of the walls, so far as you can make out, other than the one in the South wall which is securely closed. However, there is a panel at the bottom of the North wall, perhaps two feet square, set back into the wood, and you bend down to investigate this. As you do so, you see for the first time a small metal box on the floor; picking it up, you turn it over, looking for some way of opening it. There is a metallic rattling from inside when you shake it, but the box seems to be completely sealed. Examining it more closely, you notice a small slot in the middle of one side, only about an inch long, and quite narrow. Your sword is much too wide, but a fine, narrow blade in the slot might enable you to get out whatever is rattling inside. If you have discovered a silver dagger, turn to **97**. If not, turn to **42**.

225

It is nightfall by the time you get back to the coast again, your party of former prisoners with you. The boat that you landed by is still there, but it will not carry all of you. As you make camp for the night, you think about what to do next. Wood will have to be cut in the morning, rafts made, to be towed behind the boat for the journey back to Glengantha.

There is little there, however, to attract you – the encroaching desert will soon have made a wilderness of the place, and the Glenganthans will have resettled here. So perhaps, you think, looking up at the moon which is now just waning, it might be best to stay here in Nanglidia for a while, to explore further. This adventure is over now – but there will be others over the horizon.



MESSAGES FROM BEYOND

Dear PROTEUS,

I'd just like to tell you what a godsend PROTEUS has been to me. From Issue 8 onwards, I've been a devoted follower, and I look forward to every other month. I love r.p.g.s, and my personal favourites are *"Shadows on the Sand"* and *"Overlord!"*

One quick mention about Sci-Fi: I'm not too keen on them (although Rebel Planet is excellent), but if they're blended with TRUE Fantasy – as in No. 11 – that's what I call innovative and entertaining.

I'd quickly like to add that a group of friends and I are working on an r.p.g. computer game and gamebook. Anyone interested, see Pen Pals.

P.S. Hope you like the enclosed pic, and tell Mark Dunn his artwork is par excellence.

P.P.S. We've also started a computer/r.p.g. fanzine, so if anyone's interested, write to the same address.

P.P.P.S. Please publish this letter, as I've sent in zillions of letters to mags and they're not printed! And can you believe this – Kate Moffat (No. 11) sits by me in Maths!

Anjan Anthony Mandal,
Pen-y-lan,
Cardiff.

We think you and Kate ought to enter into serious and meaningful discussions in the light of this apparent communications breakdown.

Dear PROTEUS,

I was shocked, I almost killed myself! Sci-Fi itself was bad, but I still saved you from the rubbish bin, now I regret it. Issue 9 was impossible to do, but I got so bored with Issue 11 I fell asleep whilst reading it.

Colin Smith,
Havant,
Hants.

We gather you didn't like it.

Dear PROTEUS,

I don't entirely agree with Carl Wick (No. 11), for Ian Livingstone and his companion Steve Jackson deserve some credit, especially for their settings, though not for value.

But I'm afraid I'll have to take Carl's route and dump the books to show what a faithful and loyal servant I am.

I've been collecting PROTEUS since Issue 4 (a friend recommended it to me). All I can say is, how do you do it? Every time a great adventure – except for Issue 11, I thought, as I'm not keen on Sci-Fi. But it was good, and all I can say is, how do you open the safe at reference 177? And please, please, please, more drawings: I just can't get enough of them. And Quazi-Do-Do has got to be the funniest thing since dumping Ian Livingstone's books.

Finally, I wouldn't mind paying more for an extended adventure, a fan club or a write-your-own-adventure page, as I'm useless at mine. I'm sure other readers would agree.

P S. Please print my picture of a ghoul, he looks a bit like my dad.

Gary White,
St. Neots,
Cambs.

He also looks rather like a certain David Brunskill – who is not a million miles from here.

I am 11 years old, pen pals wanted age 10 to 12.
David Connelly,
[redacted],
Kinglassie,
Fife.

Anyone interested in r.p.g.s, and fantasy novels by such authors as Tolkein and Hardy. Also, we're working on a computer game and gamebook, and a fanzine.
Anjan Anthony Mandal,
[redacted],
Pen-y-lan,
Cardiff[redacted].

Mark Keepe,
[redacted],
King's Lynn,
Norfolk[redacted].

Pen pal wanted, age 11, 12, male. All letters to:
Christopher Meadows,
[redacted],
Bromborough,
Wirral, Merseyside[redacted].
Interested in r.p.g.s & miniatures.

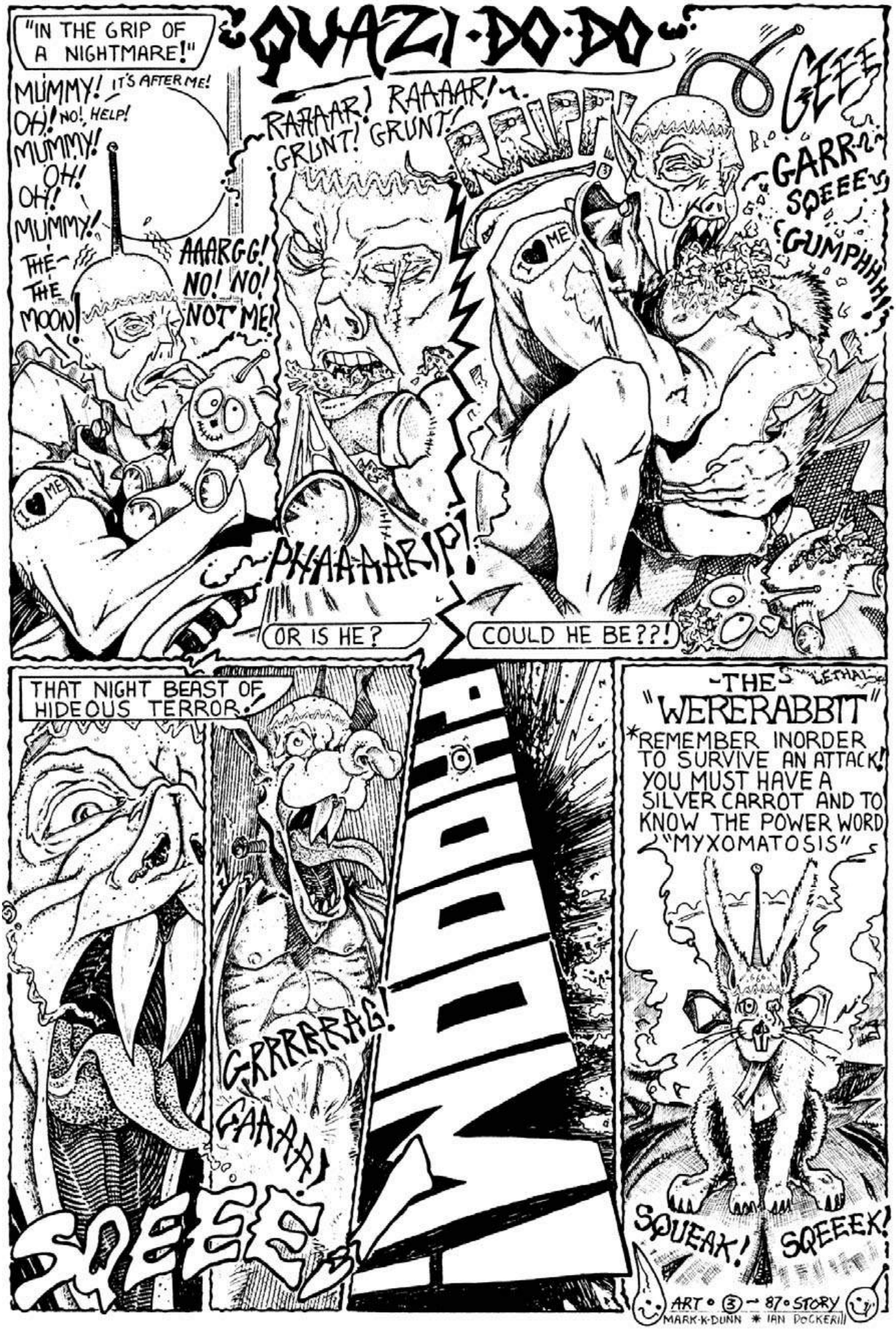
Anyone who likes fantasy.
Joseph Fisher (age 13),
[redacted]
Taunton,
Somerset[redacted].

A pen-pal is wanted, if possible a girl age eleven. I like Proteus, Warlock and adventure games.
Colin Smith,
[redacted],
Havant,
Hants[redacted].

Are you a boy, 14–16, and like collecting comics? Then write to:
Gavin Stoddart,
[redacted],
Armadale,
West Lothian[redacted].

If anybody would like me as a pen-pal, please write to the address below:
Daniel Keeble,
[redacted],
Chelmsley Wood,
Birmingham[redacted].

Fantasy-mad female: any other lonely, mad weird people out there apart from me?
Jackie Clewlow,
[redacted],
Hartshill,
Stoke-on-Trent,
Staffs[redacted].


QUAZI-DO-DO
"IN THE GRIP OF A NIGHTMARE!"
MUMMY! IT'S AFTER ME!
OH! NO! HELP!
MUMMY!
OH!
OH!
MUMMY!
THE THE MOON!
AAARGG! NO! NO! NOT ME!
RAAAAR! GRUNT!
RAAAAR! GRUNT!
RRIP!
I ♥ ME
GEEE
GARR
SQEEE
GUMPHHH!
PHAAARIP!
OR IS HE?
COULD HE BE??!
THAT NIGHT BEAST OF HIDEOUS TERROR!
GRRRRRAG!
GAAAA!
SQEEE!
THE LETHAL "WERERABBIT"
*REMEMBER INORDER TO SURVIVE AN ATTACK! YOU MUST HAVE A SILVER CARROT AND TO KNOW THE POWER WORD "MYXOMATOSIS"
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MARK-K-DUNN * IAN POCKERIL

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